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THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUDES 4 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES AND 4 PAGES OF TIMES HEALTH

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Ahead of PM Modi's visit to Israel, New Delhi and Jerusalem unequivocally condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism, and reaffirm principle of zero tolerance towards terrorism, P 15

Trump claims General Dan Caine, chair of the joint chiefs of staff, believes that **any eventual military action ordered against Iran will be 'something easily won'. But that is not what Caine has told Trump** and other senior advisers in meetings, sources say, P 18

London police have released former ambassador to US Peter Mandelson on bail amid an ongoing probe into his ties to disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein, P 18

Captain Harry Brook scores his first T20I century to take England (166/8) into World Cup semifinals with a two-wicket win against Pakistan (164/9) in Super Eights P 21

Warehouse blaze kills woman and 5 kids in Meerut

A suspected short circuit in a ground-floor warehouse stacked high with garments for Eid set off a fire in Meerut on Monday night, killing a 28-year-old woman and five children in the house above. Police said the men in the family had gone to a mosque for prayers and the women were preparing dinner. P 15

TOI HEALTH+

How diabetes challenge in India has moved beyond types I & 2

This calculator can tell you your heart risk score

Khichdi or risotto, which one is healthier?

+ much more, on P 12

SC: Need mechanism to make voting mandatory

'Not Necessarily Punitive Step; Measure To Make Nota Option Void'

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New Delhi: Supreme Court on Tuesday said some mechanism needs to be devised, not necessarily punitive, to make voting compulsory so that democracy gets stronger by attracting more eligible people to contest elections and render Nota option redundant.

A bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi said Nota option was devised to attract better candidates to the fray and to encourage voters to exercise their franchise. The decade-long experience shows that a minuscule percentage of voters exercised the option, it said. These observations came from the bench which was hearing a PIL by Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy which argued for making Nota a candidate in the constituencies where only one candidate is in the fray to find out whether the lone contestant had the confidence of voters. The SC pointed out that to make Nota a candidate, Parliament would be required to carry out an amendment to the Representation of People Act.

▶ EDIT: Vote or not. Your choice

▶ 'For Parl to decide', P 10

COUNTRIES WHERE IT'S A MUST

- List includes Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil (all aged 18-70), Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Honduras, Mexico, Nauru, N Korea, Peru, Paraguay, Samoa, Singapore, Turkiye & Uruguay
- Usual penalties are fines (though **Mexico has no penalty**), in some countries, the penalties are rarely enforced
- Among stricter countries, in **Brazil**, failure to justify absence or pay fine can result in person being **barred from accessing some public services**. In Singapore, **voter's name can be deleted from rolls** unless s/he seeks reinstatement

PARTIAL OR REGIONAL

- In Switzerland, only canton of Schaffhausen still enforces the rule
- France does not have compulsory voting for ordinary citizens, but it's a must for the **electoral college that chooses French senators**

London-Hyd flight diverted, then grounded in Nagpur

A British Airways London-Hyderabad flight (Dreamliner) with 188 passengers onboard was diverted from the Telangana capital to Nagpur early Tuesday and remained grounded there due to a technical issue, **reports Shilshir Arya.**

The London-Hyderabad flight was scheduled to land at Shamshabad airport at 4.38am, but it hovered briefly, turned away and landed in Nagpur around 6.38am. The diversion was allegedly triggered by heavy rains in Hyderabad. Dreamliner may likely take off from Nagpur Wednesday. Sources said the plane needed a GPS reset before it can take off again.

▶ Chopper crashes in Andaman, all 7 safe, P 6
▶ DGCA mulling stricter fines, safety ranking, P 10

▶ BA team arrives, P 10

Tata Sons chief's 3rd term on hold as Noel raises concerns

Chandra Mooted Deferral Of Decision After Some On Board Sought Vote

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Mumbai: Tata Sons on Tuesday postponed the decision on granting a third term to chairman N Chandrasekaran after differences surfaced during a board meeting over the performance of certain businesses and the scale of investments made in them, signaling ongoing divergences within the Tata Group. Chandrasekaran's second term runs until Feb 2027, giving the group time to deliberate on his reappointment.

At Tuesday's board meeting, Noel Tata, chairman of Tata Sons' principal shareholder Tata Trusts, raised concerns about businesses such as aviation, automobiles and digital services. Air India, acquired by Tata Sons in 2021, lost Rs 10,826 crore in FY25, making it the group's largest loss-making entity.

While some members suggested the chairman's tenure extension be put to vote, Chandrasekaran "recommended the decision on my extension should be deferred", he told the media while leaving the group's HQ, Bombay House. When asked what will change for the group following the development, he said, "Nothing."

The matter of extending Chandrasekaran's chairmanship was not listed on the main board agenda but was introduced as a supplementary item, said people familiar with the development.

▶ Continued on page 19

NOEL'S 'TASKS' FOR CHANDRA

Noel Tata set set 4 performance criteria for **Chandrasekaran** to deliver on before a 3rd term is granted. These are:

- Cut losses in **aviation and digital** services
- Ensure capex in **semiconductors & batteries** units doesn't drain Tata Sons' cash
- Maintain **Tata Son's** unlisted status
- Speed up exit talks with **Shapoorji Pallonji Group**

'Out of love, not lust': HC junks Pocso case

Uttarakhand HC quashed a 2022 Pocso case against a man (23) and said the offence arose "out of love, not lust". His relationship with the complainant's daughter was consensual, it said, adding the couple were now married & expecting a child. P 15

Road rage: Bizman arrested for assault

A businessman was arrested for allegedly assaulting a 65-year-old man in a road rage incident at Kengeri. The accused, Naveen, 41, reportedly picked a quarrel over right of way, pushed Nanjundappa down and sat on his chest. P 2

J'khand, Odisha judicial officers to be drafted to speed up Bengal SIR

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New Delhi: Supreme Court on Tuesday permitted the Calcutta HC chief justice to requisition judicial officers from neighbouring Jharkhand and Odisha to help such officers in West Bengal expeditiously scrutinise and determine validity of claims of voters falling under 'logical discrepancy' or 'unmapped' categories of the special intensive revision of electoral rolls.

These voters have been put under the categories because of what Election Commission considers, illogical inconsistencies in their details, documents and family tree.

▶ Supplementary list, P 10

'AADHAAR ONLY ID'

- Aadhaar can be used only for ID, **can't be used to claim citizenship**, court clarifies
- As verifying 50L voters' documents will take time, EC will publish **supplementary voter lists after Feb 28**
- Supplementary lists will be **deemed to be part of final list** published Feb 28, SC orders

Marriage regns soared to high of 1.8L in 2025

The year 2025 witnessed the most marriage registrations in Bengal, with the count of 1.8 lakh surpassing even the tally for 2023, when it had spiked after a Covid-induced pause. Though a marriage certificate is not among the 14 listed documents, officials said these were accepted during hearings to verify reasons for change in surnames and address of women. P 15

Ajit Pawar crash: 4 Learjets of VSR grounded

DGCA has ordered the immediate grounding of four Learjet 45/45 aircraft operated by VSR Ventures following a special safety audit after a Learjet 45 operated by the charter company crashed in Baramati on Jan 28, killing deputy CM Ajit Pawar and four others. It said a multi-disciplinary audit team found "several non-compliance of approved procedures in the organisation in the area of airworthiness, air safety, and flight operations". The operator has been asked to submit a root cause analysis on non-compliances. P 6

AI protest: Youth Cong chief sent to 4-day police custody

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New Delhi: A Delhi court has sent Youth Congress president Uday Bhanu Chib to police custody for 4 days. Police arrested him on Monday night accusing him of being the "mastermind" of a shirtless protest at the India AI Impact Summit.

The police asked for 7 days to question him. Judicial Magistrate Ravi, however, said that was "excessive" and granted custody till Feb 28. **The court said "phrases such as 'sovereignty of the State' or 'national security' cannot, by themselves, justify prolonged police custody."**

▶ Shorter custody, P 10

Rahul: Proud of IYC's 'babbar shers'

Rahul Gandhi said he is proud of the Youth Congress' "babbar shers" (lions) for protesting the "compromised PM", calling their arrests proof of a dictatorial attitude. Congress chief Kharge said the party "is never scared, and its workers are not cowards." P 15

Centre to launch spl HPV vax drive for 14-yr-old girls

New Delhi: In a major preventive health push against cervical cancer, the Centre is set to roll out a nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination drive for 14-year-old girls later this month, offering the shot for free at designated govt health facilities across India, **reports Anuja Jaiswal.** The campaign will target girls turning 14 each year, covering an annual cohort of approximately 1.15 crore adolescents. The vaccination will be voluntary.

▶ Cervical cancer, P 10

FAIR & GLOW!

Citizens queue up for IV therapy

There's limited proof of its long-term skin or health benefits: Docs

COMMON RISKS
- Allergic reactions
- Nausea and vomiting
- Headaches
- Irritation of the vein
- Infection of injection site
- Electrolyte imbalance
- In severe cases, anaphylactic shock, multi-organ failure and fluid overload

Vindhya Pubolu & Jahnavi TR | TNN

Bengaluru: You may have seen videos online of celebrities hooked up to IV drips while chatting with friends or getting their hair done. Or perhaps "glow drip" advertisements which recently appeared on your Instagram feed. The practice of injecting proteins such as glutathione and collagen directly into the bloodstream, a trend that began in Mumbai and Delhi, has now grown significantly in the city's beauty clinics as wellness and aesthetic options.

However, doctors caution there is limited scientific evidence supporting long-term skin or health benefits for IV therapy. They also warn that improper or unguided administration, especially outside regulated clinical settings, can lead to both short-term and long-term side effects.

Shruthi Iyer, a techie and resident of Jayanagar, said, "When I first heard about glutathione for fairness, I was hesitant because of the cost. It was not cheap at all — I spent a lot more than on any other beauty treatment before. But honestly, the glow and fairness it gave me were worth every rupee. I'm thrilled with the results; it is slightly painful, but it is amazing!"

While glutathione and collagen tablets, powders and gummies were long consumed for glowing, supple skin, IV therapy works on a similar principle, except these proteins are delivered directly into the bloodstream rather than being ingested.

When **TOI** visited several clinics and salons across the city, staff reported receiving at least 30 clients daily on average, with numbers rising during wedding and festive seasons. According to them, beauty-focused infusions such as glutathione and vitamin C are marketed for skin brightening and collagen support. They said doctors are available on board and that the drips used are produced in centralised manufacturing facilities.

What is collagen and glutathione?
Collagen is the body's natural glue that keeps skin firm, joints flexible and bones strong. It declines with age, causing wrinkles and sagging. Glutathione acts as the body's super antioxidant that protects cells, detoxes the liver and keeps skin bright and healthy.

At a popular spa and clinic on Kanakapura Road, multiple options were offered, beginning with a hydration drip priced at Rs 10,000. "Every client gets seven people come in for drips. Earlier, most women in their 40s or 50s opted for anti-ageing drips, but now people of all ages visit us. Many walk in seeking glow, relaxation and stress relief, and we also receive requests during wedding seasons and house parties for hangover drips," the clinic manager said.

Other commonly promoted options include clear skin drips, fat-burn drips, PCOS support drips, hair-fall control treatments and hangover recovery infusions. These wellness drips typically range from about Rs 5,000 to Rs 30,000 a session. Staff suggested that visible results usually require around 10 sessions spaced roughly 10 days apart, along with maintenance through diet and exercise, warning that benefits may fade within a month otherwise.

At another clinic in Jayanagar, an assistant manager noted, "Brides approach us frequently ahead of weddings to look their best, and with summer approaching, we are also seeing more demand for hydration drips due to rising temperatures."

EXPERTS SPEAK

Rather than being ingested, the body must utilise certain amino acids, vitamins and minerals on its own to produce glutathione. A healthy diet packed of whole foods that include vegetables, fruits, proteins and healthy oils is all that is required for the stimulation of glutathione and collagen production
Dr Priyanka Kaul | CONSULTANT - DERMATOLOGY, ASTER WHITEFIELD HOSPITAL

IV drips can be safe when administered by a qualified medical professional in a proper clinical setting. Risks arise when they are given in unregulated environments and by untrained individuals. At home IV therapy is particularly risky due to lack of medical supervision, sterility concerns and unregulated dosing
Dr Pankaj Singhal | HOD & CONSULTANT - INTERNAL MEDICINE, MANIPAL HOSPITAL

Man attempts to break two ATMs, held

Bengaluru: A 36-year-old man allegedly tried to steal cash from two ATMs to clear his mounting debts and was arrested within 24 hours.

The accused is Hasan Abdul Sab, a resident of VV Giri Colony in Seshadripuram and a native of Dharwad. He allegedly targeted a Canara Bank ATM in Seshadripuram and an HDFC ATM in Cubbonpet early Monday. Initially, police suspected two persons were involved in the attempted thefts. However, upon verifying CCTV footage from both ATM kiosks, investigators noticed striking similarities in the suspect's appearance and movements.

DCP (central) Hakay Akshay Machhindra formed five special teams Monday to trace the accused, and within 24 hours, Sab was arrested. "Sab's background, motive and whether he has any associates are being investigated," he added.

A senior officer said Sab confessed to being in huge debt and thus deciding to target ATMs. He had carried tools to break open the cassette and cash dispenser inside the kiosks. However, at one of the ATM kiosks, Sab's attempt failed after the security siren was triggered, forcing him to flee without stealing anything. TNN

Garbage trail leads to ₹3.6cr in fines, 82k litter violations

Marshals, CCTV Help Intensify Anti-Litter Drive

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Bengaluru: Still tossing your parcel boxes or e-commerce wrappers out onto the road? Think again. The city's waste management agency could be watching.

OVER 6 MONTHS

Between Aug 2025 and Jan 2026, an intensified anti-litter enforcement drive by Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML) resulted in over Rs 3.6 crore being collected in penalties and 82,000 violations being booked, according to official data accessed by **TOI**. The crackdown, backed by CCTV surveillance and ward marshals on the ground, targeted improper waste disposal, plastic ban violations, and public nuisance offences, including open urination and spitting, across the city corporation limits.

According to officials, each city corporation has two sub-divisions, with five surveillance cameras installed in each sub-division to monitor littering hotspots. Cases are usually mapped by zone, and action is initiated based on footage and complaints received through the helpline. Officials said more cameras are likely to be added to curb blackspots.

File photo

KEEPING WATCH Each city corporation has two sub-divisions, with five surveillance cameras installed per sub-division to track littering hotspots

STEEP COST OF DUMPING TRASH

Month	Cases registered	Fine collected* (₹)
Aug 2025	6,168	25.1 lakh
Sept 2025	21,257	98 lakh
Oct 2025	12,625	56 lakh
Nov 2025	14,337	61.8 lakh
Dec 2025	13,095	56.5 lakh
Jan 2026	15,011	66 lakh
Total	82,493	3.6 crore

– Source: BSWML | *Figures rounded off

Data shows enforcement picked up sharply after Aug last year. While the first month recorded 6,168 cases, generating Rs 25.1 lakh in penalties, Sept saw 21,257 violations — the highest — and Rs 98 lakh in penalties. Collections remained steady thereafter: Rs 56 lakh in Oct (12,625 cases), Rs 61.8 lakh in Nov (14,337 cases), Rs 56.5 lakh in Dec (13,095 cases), and Rs 66 lakh in Jan (15,011 cases).

Karse Gowda, CEO of BSWML, said enforcement was strengthened to ensure responsible waste disposal. "We launched multiple initiatives to catch litterbugs and book cases based on complaints received through the helpline. Our marshals, along with local staff, were effective in preventing random dumping on the streets," he said.

Among the more dramatic initiatives was the launch of 'Kasa Suriyuvu Habba' (Garbage Dumping Festival) in late 2025. Using video evidence, marshals traced habitual offenders who dumped waste late at night. Instead of merely issuing fines, officials returned the dumped garbage to the violators' doorsteps under supervision. During its pilot phase, 218 households got their waste "gifted" back in a single day.

"The message is clear — If you throw it on our streets, we will bring it back to your home," a senior official said.

Busted over plastic

While solid waste violations accounted for the highest number of cases, plastic ban breaches resulted in heavier financial penalties. In Jan 2026 alone, plastic violations brought in Rs 24.7 lakh. Under the revised norms, commercial establishments can face fines up to Rs 50,000 for repeat offences, while domestic users face a flat Rs 2,000 fine for dumping — a sharp increase from the earlier Rs 500.

The enforcement drive also extended to public hygiene violations. Over the six months, 308 cases of public urination and 183 cases of spitting were booked, resulting in Rs 65,300 in fines. Though the numbers are significantly lower than rubbish and plastic violations, officials say penalising such behaviour is crucial to improving overall cleanliness standards and disarmaging repeat offenders in busy markets and commercial areas.

PICK-UP ISSUE

While enforcement through fines appears to be gaining momentum, many residents point to persistent gaps in door-to-door waste collection, saying irregular pick-ups often force citizens to dump garbage on roads in the city.

Shivakumar, a resident of Doddur, told **TOI** that penalties alone will not solve the issue. "Firstly, the fines are too low for habitual offenders. They should be much higher to create real deterrence. At the same time, Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd must improve service delivery. Door-to-door trash collection is irregular in many areas, and vehicles do not arrive at fixed times. While fines are fine, the service should also improve," he opined.

No class 10, 12 before April 1, says CBSE

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Bengaluru: The Bengaluru regional office of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has directed affiliated schools in Karnataka to not begin grade 10 and 12 classes before April 1, reiterating that the academic session must run from April 1 to March 31.

It's common for Bengaluru schools to wind up classes 9 and 11 in Feb, and kick off class for 10 and 12 immediately — two months ahead of schedule. In a circular issued on Feb 25, CBSE stated many schools were "forcing" class 10 and 12 students to attend classes for the new academic session during summer vacation.

Quoting from a 2023 CBSE directive, the circular said compressing coursework into a reduced time frame could overwhelm students and lead to anxiety and burnout. Principals were advised to follow the academic calendar, it added.

A senior regional officer said the latest advisory follows complaints from parents that vacations are being sacrificed as schools conduct classes immediately after exams.

School heads flagged practical concerns, saying they cannot run classes in April when the summer is harsh in South India. The April-March calendar fits North Indian states. "CBSE must allow schools to customise timelines based on their location," said the principal of a prominent CBSE school in Bengaluru.

"We cannot start class 10 and 12 portions by June. In that case, we will not be able to complete portions in time to prepare students for the Boards. The alternative is a March start and then break for vacation. We hope the board understands our dilemma," the principal added.

Last year, nearly 94,000 students registered for class 10 and 22,000 for class 12 board exams in Karnataka.

Kogilu case: Court registers plaint against 5 officers

Bengaluru: The 7th additional chief judicial magistrate, Bengaluru city, has registered a private complaint report (PCR) against four IAS officers and an IPS officer in connection with the demolition of over 300 homes in Kogilu, near Yelahanka, in Dec 2025.

The complaint was filed against GBA chief commissioner Maheshwar Rao, Bengaluru Urban district deputy commissioner Jagadish, Bengaluru North city corporation commissioner Poornima Sunil Kumar, Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd CEO Karse Gowda, and Bengaluru police commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh. TNN

Don't take coercive steps against Ranveer Singh, HC tells police

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Bengaluru: The high court Tuesday passed a conditional ad interim order directing city police against taking any coercive steps against actor Ranveer Singh, subject to the condition that he cooperates with their investigation. The respondents were told to file their objections by Monday, the next date of hearing.

KANTARA MIMICRY

The actor had filed a petition before the court, challenging the FIR registered against him for his mimicry of a character from the Kannada film 'Kantara: Chapter 1'.

"A superstar is not 'oopar' (above) law. You have no right to hurt people's sentiments. Being an actor, you influence people. Being a superstar, you must be responsible in making statements. You cannot be loose-tongued at all," Justice M Nagaprasanna orally observed.

This was after senior advocate Sajan Poovayya, appearing for Ranveer, submitted that the petitioner had made a completely insensitive, reckless statement and tendered an apology immediately for mimicking Chamundi Daiva. He claimed the order passed by the magistrate lacked application of mind. "I may forget, you may forget, and people may forget. The internet never forgets," Justice Nagaprasanna responded.

On the other hand, the complainant's counsel submitted that it was a "shoot and scoot" attempt on the part of the petitioner. The episode unfolded during a promotion event of Ranveer's film 'Dhurandhar' at the International Film Festival of India held in Goa last Nov. On stage, Ranveer allegedly mimicked actor Rishab Shetty's portrayal of the deity in the movie 'Kantara: Chapter 1'. High Grounds police in Bengaluru registered the FIR based on a complaint by Prashant Mathai, a resident of HBR Layout.

In his petition, Ranveer claimed the entire complaint had failed to disclose the commission of any offence at his instance. He contended that the Jan 23, 2026 order of the magistrate court directing the registration of FIR also suffered from non-application of mind. He further argued that police had registered the FIR without a proper inquiry.

Ranveer submitted that he had already tendered an unconditional apology, adding that he respects all cultures, traditions, and communities in the country and has no intention of spreading hatred against any community.

Actor Ranveer Singh has got interim relief from the HC, which barred coercive action by police, subject to his cooperation with their investigation

Woman, 44, running MDMA network with Nigerian man arrested

Times News Network

Bengaluru: In a major crackdown on synthetic drug trafficking, the Central Crime Branch's anti-narcotics wing has arrested a 44-year-old woman accused of operating an MDMA supply network with a Nigerian man, targeting college students, businessmen, and IT-BT professionals in northeast Bengaluru.

CCB sleuths seized around 3,000 ecstasy pills from the woman and launched a search for the absconding foreign national. The accused, NK Subhashini, a resident of Puttanna Layout near Marasandra on Bagalur Main Road, was arrested following a tip-off received by sub-inspector Kesharamurthy K on Feb 21. Kesharamurthy and his team conducted a raid at her rented residence and recovered the pills, a mobile phone, portable weighing machine and zip-lock covers.

During interrogation, Subhashini allegedly revealed that she had known the Nigerian, identified as Latapa Patrick, for four years. Patrick is said to have sourced the pills either from Nigeria or from other Nigerians residing in Bengaluru.

Police said the duo allegedly used the illegal proceeds to lead a lavish lifestyle. Subhashini and Patrick had built a network of local customers, including students, tech professionals and businessmen, selling each pill for Rs 5,000-6,000.

Whenever Patrick got orders, he would contact Subhashini on WhatsApp with details of the orders and customer locations. She would then pack the pills in zip-lock covers and drop them off at the designated locations, police said. She'd share photographs of the parcels with visible landmarks and provide her live location. Customers collected the drugs without directly meeting Patrick or Subhashini and communicated only on WhatsApp.

Patrick, who has been residing in Bengaluru for nearly a decade, had been arrested by Kothanur police in 2018 and is currently on ton bail after allegedly skipping court proceedings.

In his complaint, Kesharamurthy said Subhashini, who is currently unemployed, joined hands with the foreign national to make illegal money. A case was registered under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act at Bagalur police station.

3k+ PILLS FOUND

As accused Subhashini's rented house in Bagalur, the police team found 620 star-shaped ecstasy tablets weighing 412 grams, 794 skull-shaped pills (408g), 700 S-shaped pills (525g), 930 bull-shaped pills (512g).

Bizman assaults 65-yr-old pedestrian, held

Times News Network

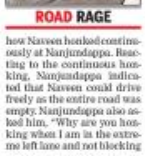
Bengaluru: A 41-year-old businessman has been arrested on charges of assaulting a 65-year-old man in a case of road rage at Kengeri. The accused, B Naveen of RR Layout in Nagadevanahalli, was also arrested in a 2024 murder case, which is in the court now.

The victim, Nanjundappa, was walking near Naveen's residence around 5.30pm Sunday. Naveen, who was driving his hatchback, grew irritated on seeing Nanjundappa walking near his parking space outside the house. However, Nanjundappa was unaware that Naveen was coming to park the car there.

CCTV footage obtained from nearby houses shows how Naveen honked continuously at Nanjundappa. Reacting to the continuous honking, Nanjundappa indicated that Naveen could drive freely as the entire road was empty. Nanjundappa also asked him, "Why are you honking when I am in the extreme left lane and not blocking your car in any manner?"

Losing his temper, Naveen stormed out of his car, abused Nanjundappa loudly and attacked him. Naveen's family members, including two women, came out on hearing Nanjundappa's screams for help. They tried to stop Naveen, but in vain. At one stage, Naveen pushed Nanjundappa down and attacked him by sitting on his chest. By then, neighbours, passersby and other commuters gathered at the spot and pulled Naveen aside.

After getting treatment at a local hospital, Nanjundappa filed a complaint with Kengeri police, who immediately arrested Naveen and produced him in court Monday. He is now in judicial custody at Bengaluru Central Prison.



CCTV screenshot

ROAD RAGE

As mercury rises, docs flag surge in kidney stones, UTIs

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Bengaluru: With temperatures already inching up, doctors in Bengaluru are noticing an early surge in cases of kidney stones and urinary tract infection (UTI) — two conditions closely linked to dehydration, sedentary lifestyles, and the rising prevalence of diabetes and obesity.

Hospitals say the trend, usually seen during peak summer, has begun weeks in advance this year. While winter typically sees about one kidney stone case a day, that number often doubles during the hotter months, pushing monthly cases to 50-60. Dr Rajeev Bashetty, consultant urologist, said: "Low water intake is among the most significant causes. Excess consumption of non-vegetarian food, especially red and organ meat, high-salt junk food, and a sedentary routine also contribute to stone formation. In Bengaluru, many urban professionals, particularly tech workers who sit for long hours with very little physical activity, are therefore at higher risk."

Echoing this trend, Dr Govardhan Reddy, director of renal transplant, uro-oncology, urology and andrology at Sakra World Hospital, said he is currently seeing 1-2 kidney stone cases a day.

While kidney stones often present with severe abdominal pain or blood in the urine, doctors warn many cases remain silent. Increased use of routine health check-ups and ultrasound scans has led to a rise in the detection of asymptomatic stones.

"Stones that remain inside the kidney may not cause symptoms unless they block the ureter, the tube that carries urine from the kidney to the bladder. I have seen patients with stones as large as 3-4 cm who had no symptoms. However, untreated stones can lead to recurrent UTIs and, over time, may damage kidney function," Dr Bashetty said.

Increased vulnerability

Kidney stones can increase vulnerability to infection. "Most patients we see with UTIs have underlying risk factors such as diabetes, chronic kidney disease, prior urinary obstruction due to stones, or prostate-related issues in men. During summer, dehydration increases stone formation, which can obstruct urine flow and predispose patients to UTIs," said Dr Prashant G Kadiyala, professor and head of nephrology at St John's Medical College and Hospital.

Women are prone to be the most affected when it comes to UTIs. According to Dr Govardhan, shared office or public washrooms, especially during travel, may contribute in some cases, though they are not the sole cause. It can also be linked to increased sexual exposure and a condition commonly referred to as honeymoon cystitis.

Doctors are also seeing more recurrent and difficult-to-treat UTIs. "This may be related to excessive or inappropriate antibiotic use in the community including higher end antibiotics. While the exact cause is uncertain, the trend of resistant and recurrent infections is clearly increasing," Dr Govardhan said.

HOW TO GUARD AGAINST...

KIDNEY STONES
- Stay well-hydrated, especially in summer, to keep urine diluted
- Limit red and organ meat, salty junk food, and fizzy drinks
- Include daily citrus intake, such as lemon water
- Seek medical care if a stone does not pass within 3-4 weeks or symptoms worsen

UTIs
- Avoid holding urine for long periods
- Maintain good personal and menstrual hygiene
- Ensure good diabetes control
- Avoid unnecessary or inappropriate antibiotic use to prevent resistance

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IDFCFIRSTBANK/SD/293/2025-26

February 24, 2026

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NSE Symbol: IDFCFIRSTB

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Sub.: Disclosure under Regulation 30 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 ("SEBI Listing Regulations").

1. Please refer to our earlier disclosures under Regulation 30 of the SEBI Listing Regulations dated February 21, 2026 and February 22, 2026.

2. Our Bank always upholds the highest principles and standards. We call ourselves a customer first bank in the way we define our product policies, disclosures, and no fine print banking. We give benefit of doubt to customers in event of difference of opinion.

3. Now was the occasion to stand up and deliver when it truly matters and put our CUSTOMER FIRST principles in action. We are a principle-based bank, and we mean it. We did not hold up the payment on account of the matter being under investigation. This is the DNA of IDFC FIRST Bank.

4. Hence, even though the investigation in the matter is ongoing, we have paid out 100% of the principal and interest to the relevant departments of Haryana Government as claimed, which works out to a net amount of INR 583 crore. The departments have sincerely thanked and appreciated the Bank for the positive approach, professional manner, and speedy and principle-based resolution.

5. The Bank remains committed to working together with the relevant Haryana Government departments and the law enforcement agencies, to pursue actions against the perpetrators of the fraud and look forward to recovering our dues.

6. Our Bank is strong with the following details as of 31st December 2025:
   - We are rated AAA CRISIL for Fixed Deposits, AA+ long-term rating from CRISIL, ICRA, India Ratings, and CARE.
   - Our Total Customer Business (Loans and Deposits) is INR 5,62,090 crores (up 22.6% YoY)
   - Our Asset quality is high (GNPA 1.69%, net NPA 0.53%, among the best in the industry)
   - Our Capital Adequacy is strong at 16.22%
   - Our Current and Savings Account % is around 50%
   - Our Unit Economics are strong and we are a growing Bank. Our Net Interest Margin is 5.76% in Q3FY26. Currently, this is not entirely reflecting in the net profit of the Bank as the Bank is in investment stage in building out products, technology, distribution, branches, ATM, rural Banking and other such universal banking solutions to be a large, diversified bank of the future. The last few years have been a phase of building the foundation blocks, and the next few years we expect the operating leverage to reflect in the earnings.
   - As stated publicly, with the MFI situation behind us, we expect to be strongly back in trajectory of profits from FY27 onwards.

We are building a world-class bank in India with strong governance and ethics and will emerge stronger from this incident.

Request you to kindly take the above on record.

For **IDFC FIRST Bank Limited**

SATISH ASHOK GAIKWAD

Satish Gaikwad
General Counsel and Company Secretary

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
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IDFC FIRST Bank
CUSTOMER FIRST

Govt job aspirants' protest flares up in Dharwad; CM blames BJP for backlog

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru/Dharwad: Protests by aspirants for govt jobs intensified in Dharwad Tuesday, with police taking several demonstrators into preventive custody as tensions escalated over delays in recruitment. Chief minister Siddaramaiah blamed the previous BJP govt for the backlog of vacancies, while the opposition accused his govt of failing to act on recruitment promises.

Protesters said some 2.8 lakh posts are vacant across various departments, with fewer than 5,000 recruitments carried out in the past three years. But Siddaramaiah defended his govt's record saying when Congress assumed office in 2023, more than 2.6 lakh posts were already vacant.

"It is deeply unfortunate that BJP members are misleading innocent students to serve their narrow political interests," Siddaramaiah said, accusing the opposition of attempting to instigate unrest instead of encouraging aspirants to focus on preparation.

He said recruitment irregularities and alleged corruption when BJP was at the helm between 2019 and 2023 eroded trust in the system and contributed to the backlog. He said several recruitment processes were stalled due to legal challenges related to internal reservation.

"Despite these structural and legal constraints, our govt has moved with determination and integrity. In the past 2.5 years alone, more than 40,000 recruitments have been completed across departments," he said.

He pointed out that his govt had relaxed the upper age limit by more than five years for upcoming recruitments to ensure candidates were not excluded due to delays.

"I understand the anxiety, frustration, and uncertainty that many aspirants are experiencing," Siddaramaiah said, assuring that filling vacancies would be accelerated "in a transparent, systematic, and time-bound manner".

In Dharwad, a large gathering of aspirants raised slogans and expressed anger over delays in recruitment. Police were deployed, and several protesters were detained after the demonstration reportedly went out of control.

A protester said, "Until vacant posts are filled, protests will not stop." Another warned that students would lay siege to Vidhana Soudha if demands are not met, adding, "We don't want to create a situation like Nepal and Bangladesh, but the govt should consider our demands." Among those detained was R Kanthakumar, president, All Karnataka State Students' Association.

ON THE BOIL: Job aspirants protest in Dharwad Tuesday. They claimed the state govt has filled only 5,000 posts in 3 years

NOT A SINGLE INTERVIEW HELD: BJP

BJP has extended support to the agitation with opposition leader R Ashoka saying, "It's been more than six months since the finance department issued orders to fill 65,000 posts, but not one interview call was given. This govt is anti-youth." Union minister HD Kumaraswamy of JD(S) said protests by unemployed youth should not be ignored and accused the govt of wasting "three precious years in power struggles". However, deputy CM DK Shivakumar hit back saying: "Why didn't BJP fill vacancies? It is we who are doing it. Realising that there is an unemployment problem, we are giving Rs 3,000 to unemployed youth (via Yuva Nidhi guarantee). We have also called for applications to positions." He said details on filling posts had been shared with KPSC.

Siddaramaiah must gag those talking of CM change: DKS

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A day after social welfare minister HC Mahadevappa publicly said he would like to see a Dalit as chief minister, deputy chief minister and KPCC president DK Shivakumar distanced himself from the remark, saying it was up to chief minister Siddaramaiah to rein in ministers and MLAs.

Asked about what he had called "out of turn statements" by party colleagues, Shivakumar said, "It is the CM who must control ministers. It is also his prerogative to keep a check on MLAs speaking about it. I've been doing whatever I can and in my capacity as KPCC president, I have been reporting it to the party high command."

On Mahadevappa's specific remarks, Shivakumar struck a sarcastic note. "He may be aware that the high command is considering a change in CM. Considering he is also part of the high command in Delhi, he must have demanded a Dalit CM. I have not received any indication of a change of CM," he said.

He also denied being summoned to Delhi to discuss the issue, saying, "I have not received any call. My visit to Delhi concerns matters related to my department."

On discussions with PWD minister Satish Jarkiholi, Shivakumar said, "We exchanged notes and prepared a roadmap to ensure Congress remains in office after 2028. Our thoughts are aligned and in tune with the needs of the party."

Backing first-time MLAs seeking cabinet berths, he said, "How long can the old guard remain ministers? There needs to be a new wave of leadership and fresh thinking. Ultimately, it is a decision of the high command and the CM. We are like-minded individuals, and he is deeply concerned about the party. We are preparing plans to bring our govt back to the helm."

On reports of MLAs seeking cabinet posts, Shivakumar said, "Everyone has aspirations... A new generation must grow. How long can we hog these positions? I have been a minister for 36 years."

HOUSING SUPPORT? Deputy CM DK Shivakumar met Shivarathri Deshikendra Swami of Suttur Mutt in Mysuru Tuesday

Lamani bribery case a shame: CM

Two days after the Lokayukta caught BJP MLA Chandru Lamani and three people allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 5 lakh to execute irrigation and construction works in Gadag, chief minister Siddaramaiah said it was a "matter of shame" that BJP members, who accused others of corruption, are themselves facing bribery allegations. "Shirahatti BJP MLA Chandru Lamani was caught by Lokayukta in a bribery allegation... Let the Lokayukta investigation proceed, and the full truth come out. We won't obstruct it," he said in a post on X. Deputy CM DK Shivakumar also mocked BJP, saying sarcastically, "Aren't BJP politicians the most honest in the country?" and added, "Let's wait for the Lokayukta's statement."

TALKING FUNDS: Telangana deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, also the state's finance minister, called on CM Siddaramaiah at his official residence in Bengaluru Tuesday

Arrests expose Centre's cowardice, says Priyank

IT-BT minister Priyank Kharge condemned the arrest of Indian Youth Congress (IYC) workers for their protest at the AI Summit, saying on X: "The arrest of our IYC workers is deeply condemnable. A non-violent protest does not justify gruelling interrogation, arrests or intimidation. This heavy-handed response only exposes this fascist govt's cowardice."

New rules allow change in use of agri land bought pre-2020

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Bengaluru: People who purchased agricultural land prior to 2020 to set up schools, housing layouts or industries but could not start their projects can now apply to change how the land is used, following new rules notified by the revenue department.

Karnataka Land Reforms (Amendment) Rules, 2025, lays down a clear process for approvals by district authorities and the govt. Landowners can now seek govt permission to use their land for purposes other than those originally approved.

Under the new rules, district deputy commissioners can decide applications for change of use for land parcels up to four hectares. However, all proposals from Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru Rural districts, irrespective of land size, and proposals from other districts involving land above four hectares, will be sent to the govt for approval by a high powered committee (HPC) headed by the chief secretary.

Rajender Kumar Kataria, additional chief secretary (revenue), said, earlier, non-agriculturists needed govt permission to buy agricultural land and were required to stick to the approved purpose. "They were required to implement the project within seven years from the date of acquisition, with a possible extension of two years for valid reasons," he said.

But many projects could not be executed due to delays in approvals or changes in land-use patterns around the site. "For instance, land acquired for industrial use may later be surrounded by residential development, making it unviable to establish an industry," Kataria said. "In such cases, the amended rules will now allow the landowner to seek permission to use the land for residential or educational purposes."

Similarly, if industrial development comes up in an area where land was earlier approved for educational use, the owner can apply to change the land use for industrial purposes.

Besides the chief secretary, the HPC will comprise senior officials from revenue, commerce and industries, education, horticulture and urban development departments as members.

System rolled out; will cut delays, curb touts

Bengaluru: Revenue minister Krishna Byre Gowda Tuesday launched a statewide automatic property mutation system that enables the revenue department to update land ownership records in the Record of Rights, Tenancy and Crops (RTC) without human intervention.

Gowda said the reform marks a major milestone in the department's transformation drive. During a month-long pilot in Mandya, the system enabled 90% of mutation transfers to be processed automatically.

AUTOMATIC LAND MUTATION

Registration of mutation, a core function of the department, earlier required citizens to make several visits to offices and often involved delays and middlemen. "With automatic mutation, citizens can complete khata transfers or registration of mutation using their mobile phones at home," Gowda said.

He said auto mutation was introduced for documents not requiring statutory notice from April 2024. Between April 1, 2024, and Feb 20, 2026, 35,11,987 khata transfers were completed through the system. Digital signatures replaced physical visits and biometric authentication, saving time for both citizens and officials.

The system has been expanded statewide for documents requiring a seven-day notice period. Registered transactions carry a seven-day notice period, and non-registered cases carry a 15-day notice period. Applications are auto approved on the 8th (registered) and 16th day (non-registered) if no objections are raised.

Information on mutations can be obtained from e-Chavadi. Disputed applications must be submitted with relevant documents through e-KYC within the stipulated time. Only applications with appropriate documents will be transferred to the tahsildar concerned, where they must be resolved within 90 days, after which khata transfers will be carried out through automated mutation. TNN

AADHAAR LINK TO STAMP OUT FRAUD

To curb fraudulent transactions and secure ownership, Byre Gowda urged landowners to link Aadhaar with RTC records. He said any change, sale, court order or name addition would trigger SMS alerts to owners, helping prevent unauthorised mutations. Rajender Kumar Kataria, additional chief secretary, said the system would also reduce the workload of revenue inspectors and village accountants, as they would no longer need to visit tahsildar offices to complete mutation procedures.

High-maintenance Mexican grass on Soudha lawns to go

Pearl Upsana @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The govt is planning to gradually shrink the area covered by Mexican grass at Vidhana Soudha due to sustainability concerns and manpower constraints. Discussions are under way to cut coverage to a third of the existing area.

Of the 27-acre gardens area at the 70-year-old Soudha, about four acres are currently covered by Mexican grass, while the rest comprise hedges and shaped trees.

"This grass is used in VVIP areas such as along the sides of Kengal Hanumanthaiah statue at the north gate," said Gangappa S Hombal, assistant director (horticulture), Vidhana Soudha. "While it was once widespread across the lawns, it is sensitive to harsh weather and trampling, making it difficult to maintain. At present, only about 30% of lawns are covered with Mexican grass, largely procured from private nurseries in Devanahalli. The remaining 70% consists of more robust varieties — pearl grass and buffalo grass — which are widely cultivated in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh."

Mexican grass is also prone to weeds. Pearl grass, which has a similar appearance, is more resilient.

Resources required to maintain gardens have been in focus during meetings to prepare for summer. The department uses approximately 13.3 lakh litres of water per week to maintain the gardens. Mansoon provides some respite as consumption drops nearly fourfold to about 2.8 lakh litres per week. Water sources include Cauvery, borewells and treated sewage supplied by Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board.

Withonly 30% of the sanctioned 56 labourers currently in place — and several staff members set to retire by 2031 — the department is pushing to make the gardens as low-maintenance as possible.

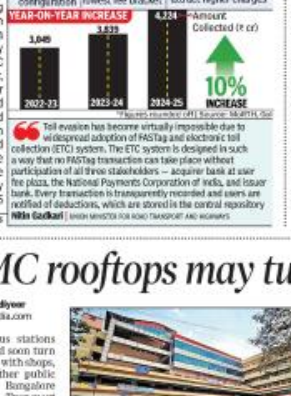
"We are hopeful of fresh hands," Hombal said. "Currently, sprinklers cover most lawn areas, while gardeners manually hose remaining spaces. We need manpower even for basic upkeep."

NOT SO GREEN: Mexican grass is sensitive to harsh weather, trampling and prone to weeds

Toll revenue from national highways in K'TAKA WENT UP 10% IN 2024-25

Toll collections on national highways across Karnataka have witnessed a sharp rise over the past three years, according to the central govt. Sharing details in response to a question by RS member GC Chandrashekhar, Union minister for road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari revealed that revenue in the state increased by 10% in 2024-25

— Text by Anesh S



"Toll evasion has become virtually impossible due to widespread adoption of FASTag and electronic toll collection (ETC) system. The ETC system is designed in such a way that no FASTag transaction can take place without participation of all three stakeholders — acquirer bank at user fee plaza, the National Payments Corporation of India, and issuer bank. Every transaction is transparently recorded and users are notified of deductions, which are stored in the central repository

Nitin Gadkari UNION MINISTER FOR ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

HC quashes case against principal over alleged national flag insult

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

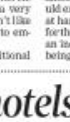
Bengaluru: In a relief for BC Venugopal, principal of Bagalagunte Govt High School, Nagasandra, the high court quashed proceedings against him registered under Section 2 of Prevention of Insults to National Honours Act, 1971.

Activist BM Chikkanna had filed a complaint in Oct 2024, alleging that Venugopal was depicted standing with his slippers on the national flag in his WhatsApp status uploaded during Gandhi Jayanti celebrations.

Venugopal claimed his mobile phone was with his students, and they had edited his picture and placed it above the national flag. According to Venugopal, he had no intention to insult the flag nor had any knowledge about what was being circulated by the students. He told the court since he is a very strict teacher, students didn't like him and edited his image to embarrass him.

On the other hand, additional state public prosecutor BN Jagadeesha submitted that even if students edited and posted the image, the case must be investigated.

Justice M Nagaprasanna pointed out every high court that interpreted Section 2 of Prevention of Insults to National Honours Act clearly held that lack of mens rea would necessarily lead to quashing of proceedings for an offence under the section, as the word employed is "intentional".



If the two photos are seen in juxtaposition, it becomes clear that a picture of the petitioner taken elsewhere was edited and placed on the national flag. It ostensibly could not be by the teacher himself but, as admitted, by the students. The petitioner also gave a plausible explanation for the students doing so, he added.

Even otherwise, there are no antecedents of Venugopal that would entail investigation in the case at hand. He is the school principal for the last 7-8 years and did not face an incident of the kind that is now being projected, the judge said.

Foreign tourist in Mysuru gets back lost mobile phone

Mysuru city police helped a foreign tourist get back her lost cellphone quickly.

VV Puram police said the woman lost her mobile inside a park. Soon after receiving a complaint, police attended to it and tracked her phone. The phone was taken by a man who found it inside the park.

Home minister G Parameshwara stressed the need for people-friendly policing and stronger public safety measures, especially given Mysuru's status as a major tourist destination. He suggested city police focus on tourist-friendly initiatives, as Mysuru is attracting foreign visitors in appreciable numbers, and ensuring safety will help maintain Mysuru's reputation as a welcoming destination for yoga education. TNN

TTMC rooftops may turn into hotels & gyms

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Bengaluru: Bus stations in the city could soon turn into lively hubs with shops, eateries and other public amenities as Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) plans to monetise rooftop spaces at key transit hubs to boost non-fare revenue.

The corporation has floated tenders to lease terrace areas at Shantinagar and Vijayanagar Traffic and Transit Management Centres (TTMCs), opening the door for restaurants, cafes, supermarkets, gyms, clinics and coaching centres to operate above busy bus stations. At Shantinagar, 20,097 sqft of rooftop area is available, while Vijayanagar TTMC has 20,956 sqft on offer. Shantinagar TTMC has been operational since 2010. The TTMC housed multiple govt offices, commercial establishments and parking lots and other facilities. Vijayanagar TTMC was inaugurated in 2013. Both the TTMCs were built under the JNNRUM scheme. More than Rs 160 crore was spent on building them.

The corporation fixed the licence fee at Rs 6.8 lakh per month (including GST) for Shantinagar and Rs 7.5 lakh per month (including GST) for Vijayanagar.

The initial licence period is for three years, extendable by another three years on mutual consent. The successful bidder has to remit 11 months of the offered licence fee as a security deposit. A three-month rent-free gestation period will be provided for development of the space.

BMTC permitted over 15 activities, including retail outlets, supermarkets, veg and non-veg restaurants, cafes and bakeries, tuition and coaching centres, gyms, clinics, pharmacies, showrooms, multiplexes, game zones, dormitories and sports facilities without liquor service. However, hazardous industries, liquor sales, slaughterhouses, automotive workshops, heavy storage, data centres with high cooling loads and polluting or noisy industrial activities have been strictly prohibited.

The terraces will be handed over on an as-is-where-is basis. Licensees have to obtain all statutory approvals, including building plan sanctions, fire safety clearance and occupancy certificates, before commencing operations. Structural alterations without prior approval are not permitted, and all works have to comply with municipal bylaws and safety norms.

MOVE TO MONETISE: BMTC has floated tenders to lease about 20,097 sqft of terrace area at Shantinagar TTMC

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Courting trouble: 4 promised HC posts, cheated of ₹48L

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Bengaluru: A group of seven people allegedly cheated four aspirants of Rs 48 lakh by promising them jobs at Karnataka high court and subordinate courts in a three-year recruitment racket complete with staged interviews with a 'judge' and appointment letters issued with the HC emblem.

Jayasimha, 39, from Rajarajeshwarinagar, was one of the victims. He quit his job at a private firm in Malaysia and returned to India in April 2023. Having lost Rs 14 lakh to this fraud, he lodged a complaint with Basaveshwaranagar police on Feb 29. Other complainants are Yogesh DR, Bharath Kumar and Gurukiran D. The accused — Sudarshan Adyantaya, Arjun Adyantaya, Anitha Adyantaya, Lavin Janet Monterio, Jaisan Desoza, Mahendra S Kanchan and Rakesh S Kanchan — are absconding. The scam was pulled off between 2023 and 2025.

On a recommendation from a family friend, Jayasimha and others were taken to Sudarshan's residence in Basaveshwaranagar. Sudarshan, son Arjun and other family members allegedly assured the four aspirants that instead of pursuing private jobs, they could help them obtain permanent govt positions in the high court based on their qualifications.

Jayasimha said he opted for the post of second-division assistant. The accused directed the aspirants to visit an office, Aashirvad Enterprises, in Sahakaranagar. The victims claimed they were shown documents bearing letterheads of the HC, district courts, civil courts and taluk courts in Karnataka.

Sudarshan allegedly instructed candidates to pay the agreed amount in equal instalments in cheque and cash. After aspirants signed the applications, they were not given receipts, citing confidentiality linked to court procedures. In May 2023, the victims were allegedly called to a hotel in HMT Layout, where an elderly man was introduced as a judge.

Over 40 aspirants were summoned and allowed to meet the 'judge' in batches. The aspirants were shown 'appointment orders along with salary details'. They were told letters would be sent by post and that they should report for duty in 15 days.

Jayasimha allegedly paid Rs 14 lakh, as did three others. However, a year passed and no official appointment letters were delivered. Eight months ago, when they confronted the accused, they were allegedly issued post-dated cheques as refunds but they asked them not to deposit the cheques, promising to return the money in cash. The money has not been returned yet.

#DontGetScammed

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Fake ophthalmologist from 'Berlin' dupes doctor of ₹22L

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

MATRIMONY SCAM

Bengaluru: A doctor lost over Rs 22 lakh in a matrimonial fraud after being lured into a fake relationship with an alleged ophthalmologist based in Berlin through an online platform.

The Richards Town resident told police she registered on the matrimonial portal on Dec 20, 2025 and soon got a response from a person identifying himself as Dr Ganesh Barman. Claiming to be an ophthalmologist, he said he was divorced and living in Germany, and his seven-year-old daughter was studying in a boarding school. While sharing his number, Barman said he was the only son of his England-based parents. He claimed he planned to relocate to India by Feb to set up a hospital in Delhi.

The two communicated through WhatsApp calls and chats. Over time, he gained the woman's trust by speaking about marriage plans and his ambitious healthcare project in India.

The fraud unfolded when Barman claimed his international bank account had suddenly become non-functional while he was transferring funds to agents in India for the project. He then requested the doctor to help by transferring money from her bank account to various agents.

The woman transferred large sums from her account from Jan 9-24. As she did not have sufficient money, she asked her brother-in-law, who transferred more money. After she transferred over Rs 22.2 lakh, the fraudster kept asking more money. She realised she was being deceived and filed a complaint.

Water supply to be disrupted tomorrow

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Several areas in east and south Bengaluru will face disruption in water supply Thursday.

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board will take up installation of EMF meters near Gottigere reservoir as part of Cauvery V Stage project. Affected areas: Whitefield, Nallurhalli, Siddapura, Nagondanahalli, Ramagondanahalli, Channasandra, Hoodi, Garudacharpalya, Doddanekkundi, Mannekolala, Kamanaswamy Layout, Poornaprajna Layout, Banashankari, Kollahalli, Anjanapura, Gottigere, Begur, Kodichikkanahalli, Kudlu, Kadugodi.

Pumps will shut down during the installation between 8am Thursday and 6am Friday the water board said.

Free bus travel for II PU students

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

To help students appearing for II PU examination, Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation is offering them free travel in its city, sub-urban, ordinary and express buses from their houses to examination centres.

Students must produce their admission ticket to avail the facility during the examination period from Feb 28 to March 17.

Bill's many penal provisions appear superfluous: Lawyer

▸Continued from page 1

The bill proposes penalties, including life imprisonment and death. The govt move on the bill follows the killing of 19-year-old Manya Patil, who was six months pregnant, in Dharwad in Dec. Her Lingayat family allegedly opposed her marriage to a Scheduled Caste boy. Her father and family members were arrested in connection with the case.

"Caste-based discrimination is continuing to manifest in brutal forms of violence, including honour killings, particularly against young adults who exercise their constitutional right to choose life partners through inter-caste marriage. It becomes the govt's duty to ensure freedom of choice in marriage and caste-based crimes," said law and parliamentary affairs minister HK Patil, explaining how the bill came into being.

Former BJP minister S Suresh Kumar alleged the bill targets only the Hindu community in the guise of inter-caste marriages and said the party will oppose the bill. Community organisations representing upper castes, including Veerashaiva-Lingayats and Vokkaligas, have expressed reservations about the bill.

"While the bill title is derived from Basavanna's vachana with emphasis on inclusivity, it promotes exclusivity. We will plan our next step depending on the govt's move," said HM Renuka Prasanna, national secretary of Akhila Bharata Veerashaiva-Lingayat Mahasabha.

Experts questioned the need for a new bill, arguing existing laws already cover honour killings and related crimes. "The bill's many penal provisions appear superfluous and unnecessary. Murder has always been punishable in India and today's law prescribes life imprisonment and even death for murder," said Supreme Court advocate and Constitution expert KV Dhananjay.

BILL PROPOSES LIFE TERM, DEATH

- Bill protects constitutional freedom to marry a person of one's choice, irrespective of caste
- Killing in the name of "honour" punishable with minimum five years' imprisonment, extendable to life imprisonment or death penalty
- Causing grievous hurt punishable with three years' imprisonment and fine up to Rs 3 lakh
- Physical relationship with an adult woman on promise of marriage, later withdrawn upon knowing her caste, to be treated as rape
- Prohibits family members, relatives or others from gathering to obstruct a marriage
- Unlawful assembly to obstruct marriage punishable with three to five years' imprisonment and fine up to Rs 2 lakh
- Couples can declare age and consent before district magistrate and seek court injunction against family interference
- District forums to be set up with a retired judge, police officer, revenue officer and sub-registrar to facilitate marriages and provide counselling
- District committee to oversee implementation and provide rehabilitation to victims
- Fast-track courts for trial of cases under the law

BASAVANNA'S INCLUSIVITY

The bill title is inspired by saint-poet Basavanna's vachana *Ivanavanu Ivanavanu Endodanayya, Iva Nammavo Evanavanu Endenayya...* (Don't make people ask whom I belong to, make them say I belong to them...)

APU claims no talk held on univ premises

Students protesting on the university campus against ABVP

▸Continued from page 1

The poster stated that no convictions had followed and invited participants to discuss "violence by the Indian State in Kashmir". By evening, ABVP activists gathered outside the university gate, shouting slogans. They allegedly smeared black paint on and damaged the university's name board before entering the campus. "They tried to scale the gate and force their way in and were moved to Sarjapur police station," an officer said.

In a statement condemning those who had barged into the campus, APU clarified it had not granted permission for the event and that no discussion was held on university premises. With the programme called off, large groups of students led by AISA later assembled inside the campus to protest ABVP's actions.

In a statement, ABVP alleged that through AISA-affiliated Spark, gatherings were being organised to promote anti-national ideas and portray Indian soldiers as perpetrators. It further claimed the programme aimed to condemn Operation Sindoor and support Naxal and Maoist ideologies, thereby "sowing anti-national thoughts in young minds". ABVP demanded that the university's recognition be revoked.

Aruthika, AISA general secretary, Bengaluru chapter, termed the incident "a clash of ideologies". She accused ABVP of attempting to stifle debate in academic spaces and intimidate students into silence.

APU slams 'ruckus'

In a statement, APU said: "Those who had forced their way into our campus were protesting an event that they claimed was going to be held on our campus. Azim Premji University had not authorised any event of such nature. This event, allegedly planned by a small group of students, did not happen at all." The statement further said: "We strongly condemn the ruckus and violence that was unleashed on our campus."

S'mogga teen hit on chest, collapsed

▸Continued from page 1

Preliminary investigation indicated that a fight broke out among a group of boys, some of whom were reportedly school dropouts. While early local reports suggested the clash may have been triggered following a dispute over a cricket match, SP B Nikhil clarified that Santhosh was allegedly attacked when he tried to settle a fight among the accused.

One of the accused reportedly struck Santhosh forcefully on the chest. He collapsed and was rushed to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

CM Siddaramaiah assured the family that the govt will pursue the strictest legal action against those responsible. "It is deeply shocking to learn that the perpetrators are minors; it is a tragedy that children who should be building their future and supporting their families are falling prey to bad habits. Developing a mindset of hatred and violence at such a young age is extremely dangerous, and if left unchecked, the situation will spiral out of control," he said in his post on X.

Zilla panchayat CEO Hemant described Santhosh as a good student and clarified that the death did not occur during the special class.

Activist and parent Shashi Sampalli criticized the education department, raising concerns about student safety during late-evening classes, including inadequate lighting and lack of security.

Organ retrieval centre to make donation easier on families

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Announced in 2025 at a cost of Rs 1 crore, Jeeva Spandana aims to make the process easier for donors and their relatives, by allowing families private time to grieve before organ retrieval

Bengaluru: In the next couple of months, a state-of-the-art non-transplant organ retrieval centre named Jeeva Spandana will be inaugurated at Victoria Hospital in the city. Unlike regular centres where brain-dead patients are moved directly to the operating theatre, this facility allows families private time to grieve before organ retrieval. This is aimed at encouraging organ donations by making the process more comfortable for families.

Organ retrieval centres are specialised hospital facilities equipped to identify, maintain and retrieve organs from brain-dead donors for transplantation. They focus on supporting donor families and coordinating with transplant centres, often without performing transplants themselves.

Announced in 2025 at a cost of Rs 1 crore, Jeeva Spandana aims to make the process easier for donors and their families, according to a medical officer at Victoria Hospital. "Once the brain death is declared, we will separate the donors and their families from the regular ICU to the four-bed ICU in Jeeva Spandana," said Dr Deepak S, medical superintendent, Victoria Hospital. "This will be a smaller, more ambient space where family members can visit the patient as many times as they want and spend as much time as they wish to. We can then proceed with organ retrieval."

The centre will feature an information kiosk and a communication centre. "The communication centre will have facilities to relay live updates about the organs to other cities, making it easier for them to plan transplant procedures," Dr Deepak said.

Around the same time as the announcement of the centre at Victoria Hospital, health minister Dinesh Gundu Rao had stated that organ retrieval centres would be set up at 22 medical college hospitals across the country as per norms. However, progress has been limited on this front.

"Apart from Victoria Hospital, we did not set up organ retrieval centres anywhere else, as the need is greater in Bengaluru than elsewhere," said Sharan Prakash Patil, medical education minister. "Here, we conduct kidney transplants at the Institute of Nephro Urology and liver transplants at the Institute of Gastroenterology Sciences and Organ Transplant, so retrieval centres are necessary."

He confirmed there are no plans for additional centres in the near future, except for the 1,000-bed charitable super-specialty multi-organ transplant hospital being developed by Azim Premji Foundation in collaboration with the state govt.

TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA CONDEMNS RACIAL ABUSE AGAINST ARUNACHALI WOMEN IN DELHI

READY TO QUIT POLITICS IF MY MISTAKE IS PROVEN: EXPELLED AIADMK LEADER O PANNEERSELVAM

HACK OF THE DAY — CHEQUE BOOK LOST OR MISUSED? BLOCK IT IMMEDIATELY

WHAT IT SOLVES: Prevents unauthorised withdrawals if your cheque book is lost, stolen, damaged, or suspected to be misused.

WHAT TO DO (QUICK STEPS):

1. Log in to your bank app/netbanking → Cheque Services → Stop Cheque / Block Cheque Book.
2. If online access isn't available, call customer care and request immediate blocking.
3. Provide the cheque number range, account number and ID details if asked.
4. Request written confirmation and apply for a new cheque book.

NOTE: If you delay reporting, any misuse before blocking can become your financial liability—report loss as soon as possible.

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules

To hire **abhilash.nalwal**@timesinternet.com

Scan for more hacks

Guj HC acquits ex-DGP 23 yrs after conviction in custodial torture case

Gujarat high court on Tuesday acquitted former DGP S S Khandwawala, 23 years after he received a suspended jail-term for the alleged custodial torture of a man.

In Oct 1976, police arrested Merag Haja in a case involving the murder of Porbandar municipal president Dhanji Kotiyawala. In Nov 1976, Haja filed a criminal complaint alleging illegal detention and custodial torture at Porbandar police station. A trial began in 1982 against Khandwawala, a 1973-batch IPS officer who was the ASP in Junagadh district then, and his three subordinate police officers. A Junagadh court convicted Khandwawala to five-year imprisonment and two others to one year in jail in 2003. One officer died before the verdict. Khandwawala and his two subordinates then moved the high court. The subordinates died before the HC order. rns

Chopper carrying 7 crashes in Andaman waters, all safe

Third Charter Accident In Two Months, AAIB Initiates Probe

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: In India's third charter aircraft accident this year, a Pawan Hans helicopter carrying 7 persons ditched in shallow waters near Maya Bunder in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Tuesday morning. Unlike the 2 other fatal accidents involving non-scheduled operators, all passengers and crew in the Pawan Hans crash were safe.

The Pawan Hans Dauphin N3 helicopter (VT-PHY) took off from Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair) at around 8.30am for Rangat and onward to Maya Bunder, said Pawan Hans in a statement. The aircraft landed at Rangat at about 8.05 am and departed again around 8.15 am for Maya Bunder.

"The helicopter ditched about 300 metres short of the Maya Bunder helipad in shallow sea water at around 9.30 am. There were 4 passengers with 2 crew on board," the company said, adding that all were on board and were "safely retrieved".

An aviation source said, "Officials from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) and Pawan Hans reached the islands today; some will reach by tomorrow. The AAIB initiated an investigation."

Police personnel inspect the wreckage of the Pawan Hans Dauphin N3 helicopter that made a controlled emergency landing in the sea near Maya Bunder, after developing a technical snag, on Tuesday

The aircraft, a Eurocopter Dauphin (S365), operating with call sign PH2, was commanded by Capt Anil Jaura, with Capt T P S Gulla as co-pilot. The helicopter reportedly maintained an altitude of 2,500 feet after departure from Rangat for Mayabunder: "The last known position of the aircraft before ditching was near Dhobdera, close to Mayabunder," said a source.

Over 12 hours before this accident, another crash occurred in Jharkhand in which an air ambulance operated by Redbird Airways crashed and killed all the 7 people onboard.

Less than a month ago, on Jan 28, a Learjet aircraft operated by VSR Ventures crashed during landing at Baramati airport, killing Maharashtra's then deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and 4 others. Apart from accidents involving non-scheduled operators, there was another accident involving a flying club, Redbird Aviation. Earlier this month, a Cessna 172 (VT-EUC) belonging to Redbird Aviation, a flying training organisation, crash-landed in Vijayapura after it ran out of fuel. The instructor and the trainee pilots sustained serious injuries but survived.

ChatGPT finds a new use in Gadchiroli, cheating for exams

Soumitra.Bose
@timesofindia.com

Nagpur: Former Maoist hotbed, Gadchiroli, has emerged as the unlikely hub of tech-enabled trickery as education officials investigate mass cheating with ChatGPT by students writing Maharashtra's ongoing higher secondary certificate exams.

A team led by zilla parishad chief executive officer, Sahas Gade, caught some staffers at an exam centre in Chamorshi on Feb 18 with chits containing AI-generated answers to the day's paper. Probe suggested political science, chemistry and physics exams were compromised by an organised cheating racket with access to multiple exam centres, officials said.

The first "catch" of the Feb 18 raid was a school peon, Suraj Kelnurkar. Officials were collecting chits strewn across the exam centre when the peon's behaviour triggered suspicion that he might be helping students cheat.

Questions were fed into ChatGPT and the responses printed before being smuggled to exam halls for mass cheating

Suraj's mobile activity revealed he had forwarded screenshots of question papers to a teacher at the same school, Mahendra Kirtne. The questions were fed into ChatGPT and the responses printed before being smuggled back to the exam halls for mass cheating.

Gade said he initiated a probe and four people were suspended by Tuesday.

"We reported schoolteacher Sushil Lanjewar, exam centre conductor Mahendra Burlewar, Kirtne and Suraj to the authorities. Lanjewar has been suspended, appropriate action will be taken against the other accused soon," education officer (secondary) Vasudev Bhusar said.

STATISTICS A slice of life in numbers

In Nagaland, nearly 50% of power is lost in transmission

Power loss due to specific factors has declined from nearly 22% in FY21 to 15% in FY25, but North-East states still report high distribution losses

Source: Ministry of power, Lok Sabha reply (Feb 12, 2026)

DGCA orders grounding of 4 Learjets operated by VSR following safety audit

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Directorate General of Civil Aviation has ordered the immediate grounding of four Learjet 40/45 aircraft operated by VSR Ventures following a special safety audit after a Learjet 45 operated by the charter company crashed in Baramati on Jan 28, killing Maharashtra deputy CM Ajit Pawar and four others.

The regulator said a multidisciplinary audit team found "several non-compliance of approved procedures in the organisation in the area of airworthiness, air safety and flight operations".

"In view of the non-compliances observed, and considering the gaps in maintenance procedures, it is decided to initiate corrective measures by immediately grounding Learjet 40/45 aircraft with registration VT-VRA, VT-VRS, VT-VRV, and VT-TRI till continued airworthiness standards are restored," said DGCA.

Deficiency reporting forms for the identified areas have been issued to the Delhi-based operator. It has been asked to submit a root-cause analysis on the non-compliances for further assessment by DGCA. Further regulatory action will depend on the operator's response and restoration of compliance with prescribed standards, it said.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau is expected to come out with its preliminary report into the fatal crash before Feb 28.

3,000 hours of records of aircraft involved in Baramati crash unavailable: Rohit Pawar

NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar on Tuesday alleged hours of aircraft maintenance and flying records of the Learjet aircraft involved in the Baramati crash are unavailable, raising questions over the probe. Rohit posted on X: "Shocking information has surfaced that out 5000 hours of records at VSR, only 1800-2000 hours of records are available, while the remaining 3000 hours of records are simply not available." He wrote, "Is the inquiry being deliberately delayed to allow tampering or fabrication of these missing records for VSR?" He also raised concerns over coordination between agencies: "If VSR's owner has come to India, didn't DGCA deem it necessary to inform CID? Seeing the collusion between DGCA and VSR, and lack of coordination between agencies, it has become clear Ajit Dada holds no value in their eyes..." — **Chaitanya Marpalwar**

Man who raped, held girl captive in pit to die in jail

Nimesh.Khakhariya
@timesofindia.com

Rajkot: A special Pocso court in Gujarat's Morbi district sentenced a man to imprisonment for the rest of his natural life for abducting and repeatedly raping a 15-year-old girl in captivity in 2018. Six accomplices were given five years of rigorous imprisonment for their roles in the abduction and abetment of the crime.

On the night of Nov 11, 2018, the girl — then aged 15 years and four months — stepped out of her home to use the bathroom around 8.30am when she was abducted, the prosecution stated. The prime accused, Naresh alias Mahesh Solanki, along with seven family members and associates, forced her into a cargo rickshaw and took her to a secluded farm managed by his family.

To avoid detection, they dug a 5.5-foot pit, covered it with wooden planks and tin sheets, and concealed it with soil. The teen was held there until Dec 13, 2018, and was repeatedly raped by Naresh, who let her out only for basic needs. A medical examination found her 6 weeks pregnant, and the court later authorised the medical termination of the pregnancy.

Forensic DNA profiling confirmed that Naresh Solanki was the biological father of the foetus.

GOVERNMENT OF MADHYA PRADESH
MADHYA PRADESH URBAN DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LTD.
(Under Urban Development & Housing Department Govt.)
Awantibai Bhawan Indira Press Complex, BJP. Nagar Zone 1, Bhopal
Tel. : +91-755-270-3060,61,62; Fax: +91-755-270-3060
E-mail : mpuslpt@mpurban.gov.in
NIT No.-MPUDC/ENG/0/2026/1062 Date : 24.02.2026

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS

Online percentage rate bid on "Tender Document Appendix 2.10" for the following work to be executed under "MPUDC" are invited from registered contractors and firms of repute fulfilling eligibility criteria :

S. No.	Online Tender No.	Work	Probable Amount (in lacs)	Completion Period (months)
1.	MPUDC-[illegible]	Construction of Fire Hydrant water tank at Fire Station Chhindwara, Chhindwara District, Madhya Pradesh & Repair of Fire Hydrant	[illegible]	12 months including rainy season

1. Interested Bidder can view the NIT on website http://www.mptender.gov.in and www.mpurban.gov.in
2. The Bid Document can be purchased only Online from 10:00 AM 24.02.2026 to 15:00 PM, 12.03.2026.
3. Any clarification/other information or addenda to the NIT, if any, would be published on website only and not in Newspaper

MPM/[illegible] DEPUTY PROJECT DIRECTOR (TECH.)

REVENUE DEPARTMENT
ATALJI JANASNEHI DIRECTORATE
SSLR BUILDING, K.R.CIRCLE, BENGALURU-560001
No: AJSD/Tender/E-2087263/2025-26 Date: 25/02/2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tenders are invited from reputed firms for procurement of **DUPLEX ADF DOCUMENT SCANNERS** for Ataji Janasnehi Kendras. The Tender documents and related information can be obtained from e-Procurement portal - **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 25-02-2026 to 04-03-2026.**

Sd/-
Additional Director,
Ataji Janasnehi Directorate, Bengaluru.
DPR/CSMG. /SM/25-26

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD
(DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVT. OF KERALA)
Head Office: Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram
Telephone No. 0471-2327252, Web No. 0471-2326307
Email : [illegible]
website : www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, CIN No. U33123KL2013PSC035018
No. KMSCL/E-[illegible]/2026 Date: 23.02.2026

E-TENDER NOTICE

Online bids are invited for the procurement of Anti Haemophilic Drugs vide e-tender no. KMSCL/E-[illegible]/MPP/2026/CC and 23.02.2026 for Department of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Kerala.

Sl. No.	Name of Item	Last Date & time of Uploading of Tender	Date & time of Technical Bid opening
1.	Anti Haemophilic factor VIII with Von Willebrand 250IU	07.03.2026 5.00 pm.	09.03.2026 11.00 am.

Tender documents can be downloaded from the website www.etenders.kerala.gov.in.

(Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR (Tender Inviting Authority)

Markfed PUNJAB — A Wave Of Quality Food Products

RFP Reference Number: MFD/MKTG/2025-26/PGFP

The Punjab State Co-operative Supply and Marketing Federation Limited ("MARKFED"), an Apex Cooperative Society registered under the Punjab Cooperative Societies Act, 1961, hereby invites e-bids under a two-stage Bidding system (i.e., technical and financial) for the procurement and supply of food kits under the Punjab Government Food Programme (PGFP) for Zone I & Zone II.

This RFP pertains to Zone I (Districts: Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Gurdaspur, Pathankot, Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, SBS Nagar, Rupnagar, SAS Nagar, Ferozepur) and Zone II (Districts Fazilka, Muktsar, Faridkot, Bathinda, Moga, Mansa, Barnala, Ludhiana, Sangrur, Malerkotla, Patiala, Fatehgarh Sahib). Bidders may participate in one or both Zones. Multi-zone bidding and the allocation mechanism is detailed in the RFP.

The closing date and time to submit Bids on the State e-procurement portal, i.e., https://eproc.punjab.gov.in is 19-03-2026 at 17:00 Hrs.

Details and terms & conditions can be found at www.markfedpunjab.com and https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

Any addendum / corrigendum / correction, if applicable, shall be uploaded on MARKFED's website, i.e., www.markfedpunjab.com and on https://eproc.punjab.gov.in only. No other communication or advertisement will be given. The prospective Bidders are advised to regularly check the specified websites for any corrigendum/addendum/ clarifications regarding this RFP Document.

Managing Director,
The Punjab State Co-operative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd. (MARKFED)

Government of Punjab
(Department of Health & Family Welfare Punjab)

Bid Ref. no. e-Tender/PHSC/Proc./RC/Dialyzers & Dialyses Consumables/2026/61

The Department of Health and Family Welfare, Punjab through (Punjab Health Systems Corporation, Mohali) invites online bids for Dialyzers and Dialyses consumables under Package-I and II respectively (Rate Contract for two years), list is enclosed in the tender document available on the website https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

The schedule of major activities/ KEY DATA in this regard is as under :-

Date, time and place of Pre-bid conference	03.03.2026 at 11.30 a.m. in the committee room of PHSC office address mentioned above.
Closing date and time	10.03.2026 at 4.30 p.m.

Note :- Any Corrigendum(s) to the tender notice shall be published on the above website only and shall be considered as valid notice to all interested bidders. No separate communication shall be given.

Sd/-
MANAGING DIRECTOR
DRPR. 1722/2026-26/[illegible]

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
(Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identity Number : U40109PB2010SGOI33063 Website: www.pspcl.in
(O/o Controller of Stores & Disposal (North), PSPCL, Ludhiana)
(Email - [illegible]@gmail.com, Mobile no. - 99461-18191, 98461-22866)

Scrap e-Auction Notice

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) will conduct a forward e-auction on 27.02.2026 and 03.03.2026 for the disposal of approximately 41572 Damaged/Unserviceable Distribution Transformers (Approximate Total Start price Rs. 54 crore), lying at various Transformer Receiving Yards across Punjab, offered in separate multiple lots for each location. The e-auction will be conducted on the website portal https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/index_new.jsp. The Detailed auction catalogue with Terms & Conditions of e-auction, corrigendum and material list etc. will be available on the website https://www.mstcindia.co.in/content/Forthcoming_e-Auctions_For_All_regions.aspx and on https://www.pspcl.in/e-auction-notice.aspx. For queries related to registration, please contact at Phone No. 7229968247 or 7230022882

Controller of Stores & Disposal (North),
PSPCL, Ludhiana.
[illegible]

Government of Karnataka
Women & Child Development Department
District Child Protection Unit, Vijayapur

Publication of E-Procurement Tender

Notification has been issued for obtaining e-procurement tender through electronic means as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act (KTPP) 1999 Rules 2000 in order to identify the Human Resource Service for the Govt Home for Boys (Senior), (Junior), Govt Home for Girls, Govt Observation Home, Govt Special Acoption Institution, District Child Welfare Committee and Juvenile Justice Boards Under the Vijayapur District Child Protection Unit on outsourced basis for the year 2026-27. The details of the notification are as follows.

1) Tender Opening Date: 23-02-2026
2) Last Date for Uploading Tender Form Date: 23-03-2026 Time: 5:30 Pm
3) Estimated Tender Value Rs. 3,15,00,000/-
4) EMD to be paid along with tender Amount to be submitted through e-procurement: Rs.2,30,000/-
5) Date of Opening of Technical Envelope Date: 25-03-2026 Time: 11:30 Am
6) Date of Opening of Financial Envelope Date: 27-03-2026 Time: 11:00 Am
7) For more Information contact to officer and address, Phone Number: District Child Protection Officer, District Child Protection Unit, Vivek Nagar West, Vijayapur
Phone No. - 08352-295261.
e-mail id: dcpobijapur@gmail.com
Website: www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- District Child Protection Officer,
District Child Protection Unit, Vijayapur
[illegible]/2025-26

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP(CMG)
ISRO Headquarters, Antariksh Bhavan,
New BEL Road, Bengaluru-560 094.
Ph: 080-22172476/2033/5941 Fax No.: 080-2351 3126

E-TENDER NOTICE

On behalf of the President of India, online item-rate tenders are invited through e-tendering for the following work:

Title of Work	Establishment of Satellite Earth Station (SES) campus at Ledo, Assam - Civil, PH, Electrical, AC & Mechanical Works.
e-Tender Notice No.	CMG/ISRO-HQ/C/C/12/P/SES/LEDO/2025-26 dated 23.02.2026
Estimated Cost put to tender	Rs. 8182.00 Lakhs
Period of Completion	Twenty four (24) Months
Period during which the tender document can be downloaded	From 16:10 hrs on 23.02.2026 To: 23:59 hrs on 16.03.2026
Last date & time for receipt of tenders	up to 15:30 hrs on 27.03.2026
Due date & time of opening of tenders (Technical Bid)	16:00 hrs onwards on 30.03.2026
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Rs. 91.82 Lakhs [Valid for 180 days]

For eligibility criteria and other details, interested tenderers may please refer to the detailed bilingual (Hindi/English) Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) on website https://isro.gov.in/tenders.html and tender free view at https://tenderwizard.com/ISRO. Detailed Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) and tender documents may be downloaded from e-tendering website https://tenderwizard.com/ISRO

Sd/- Head, CMD, ISRO HQ

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
ZILLA PANCHAYATH, BELLARY
Office of the Executive Engineer, P.R.E. Division, Bellary.
No. ED/PRED/MLY/AE-1/Various Heads/2025-26/1580
Dt. 21.02.2026

Tender Notification (Through KPPP Portal only)

On behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka tenders are invited from the eligible contractors who have enrolled in Panchayat Raj Engineering Department for 05 works comprising of upgrade Road and Building works under 2025-26 & 2024-25 CM SPL GRANT, 2025-26 5054 SCP /TSP and 2022-23 TSP WORKS through KPPP portal.

Indent No.
1.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT23021
2.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25017
3.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT24754
4.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT24749
5.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT24750

Contractors are required to submit the tender before 07-03-2026 at 4.30 PM by uploading the relevant documents through KPPP portal website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in by downloading the forms for submission of tender from 21-02-2026 to 07-03-2026 at 4.30 PM. Tenders will be opened through KPPP portal on 09-03-2026 at 10.30 AM. Any changes in the notification will be published KPPP website only. Accepting/rejection of tenders without assigning reason is reserved. Any details can be obtained in person at the office or through telephone No. 08392-266171.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Panchayath Raj Engineering Division Bellari
DIPR/Bellari/1045/KSNLCA/2025-26

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
(ಪೌರಾಡಳಿತ ಇಲಾಖೆ)
TOWN PANCHAYAT CHANNAMMAN KITTUR-591115
Tq:Hukkeri, Dist:Belagavi PHONE:08332-[illegible] E-Mail:tmpt_ub_chitra@yahoo.in
Sl.No: TP/CKM/PWD/2025-26 Date:21/02/2026

Tender Notification (Through E-procurement)

Under Grants for infrastructure of upgraded ULBs from GPs for the Construction of TP Office Building for the year 2024-25 as per Karnataka Public Procurement Transparency Order 1999-2000 Act 2000 as per Standard Bid Document KW-4 nit tenders are invited. Interested PWD contractors can submit tenders only through e-procurement.
Sl. No:1:Details of Works/ ndent:DMA/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT53702, Amount(In lakhs) 443.53, EMD Amount(In Rs.):5,71,320/-

Before submitting the tender, the contractor must read and follow the rules and regulations relating to the tenders.
Pre Bid Meeting Date:12-03-2026 at 12.00am., Commencement date of downloading the Tender form from website: 23-03-2026. Last Date for Uploading (Upload) Filled Tenders: 23-03-2026 Evening: Upto 4.00 Hrs. Date of Opening of Tenders: 24-03-2026 will be opened after 4.00 PM. For more information and conditions, visit the website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/-Chief Officer
Town Panchayat Ch.Kittur
Town Panchayat Ch.Kittur
[illegible]

Time to Upgrade to a New Hawkins

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I, Nanitha Sathyanarayan w/o. SRC Sathyanarayan, R/o 7th A cross, MPM layout, Mallathalli, Bangalore-560056 Karnataka have changed my name from Daya Devi Sathyanarayan to Nanitha Sathyanarayan for all purpose by an affidavit sworn before Devaraja E. Public Notary dated 20-02-2026.

I, Abdul Wajid, S/o Hasan Sa.66/1, 4th Cross, Hidayath Nagar, Bangalore- 560045 declare that my father's Name as Abdu Subhan also Known as Sheeb Sab. As Mentioned in Death Certificate. Both name refer to the same person. Vide affidavit dtd 20-02-26 sworn before notary S. D Sharma

I, ANGELO VICKY ROY S/o Fredrick Roy, R/at A2597, Nilos House 2, Huntiya City, Chikkanahalli, Bengaluru- minus have changed my name to ANGELO ROY vide affidavit dated 24.02.2026 sworn before Notary Vani G K, Bengaluru

I, NAZIMA LATEEF, W/o. Mohammad Ismail, R/o Prince Anees Apartment, Flat 4001, Harris Road, Benson Town Bangalore have changed my name to NAZIMA ISMAIL sworn before notary Meer Hassan, Bangalore. 20-02-2026

I, Kiran K V S/o late Sri. Ph-1, Classic Orchards Lyt, Blore. is also known as Kiran K V S, with full expanded name being Kiran Kalavathi Venkatappa. Utter for all future purposes

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Shiva Kumar P S/O K Prabhakar Reddy, R/o Ward No. 10 Behind Rajeshwari Tent, Koresahalli, VTC: Dod Ballapur, P.O: Doddaballapura, Dist. Bangalore Rural (Karnataka) - 561203 have changed the name of my school as Chandan Kumar S aged 8 years and he shall hereafter be known as DEEPAK VIRAT S.

I, Chandrashekar S/O Boregowda R/O Above Canal Street, Arakere Hobali, Srirangapatnam Taluka, Pandalli, Dist. Mandya (Karnataka) - 571418 have changed the name of my school daughter Shakshini C aged 2 years and she shall hereafter be known as MANAVVI C.

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On NCERT Class 8 book: Graft in judiciary, backlog of cases

'Pendency, Judge Shortage A Challenge'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Unlike earlier editions that focused largely on the structure of courts, judicial independence and access to justice, the updated chapter in the textbook includes a detailed section on the problems confronting the judicial system

New Delhi: What slows down a court case, why public trust in courts matters, and how corruption can affect access to justice are now questions class VIII students will encounter in their civics textbook, with the latest NCERT social science book explicitly listing corruption, massive case pendency and shortage of judges as challenges facing India's judicial system.

The revised chapter, titled 'The Role of the Judiciary In Our Society', forms part of the new class VIII social science textbook released by the National Council of Educational Research and Training. Unlike earlier editions that focused largely on the structure of courts, judicial independence and access to justice, the updated chapter includes a detailed section on the problems confronting the judicial system. The book states that "people do experience corruption at various levels of the judiciary" and notes that for "the poor and the disadvantaged, this can worsen the issue of access to justice". It adds that efforts are being made at both State and Union levels to "build faith and increase transparency in the judicial system, including through the use of technology and to take swift and decisive action against instances of corruption wherever they may arise". Highlighting the scale of pendency, the textbook pegs pending cases at around 81,000 in the Supreme Court, 62.4 lakh in high courts, and 4.3 crore in district and subordinate courts. It attributes the backlog of cases to several factors, including an inadequate number of judges, complicated legal procedures and weak infrastructure.

A separate section in the civics chapter explains that judges are bound by a code of conduct governing their behaviour both inside and outside courtrooms. It refers to internal accountability mechanisms and an established procedure for receiving complaints through the Centralised Public Grievances Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS), noting that more than 1,600 complaints were received between 2017 and 2021.

It also quotes former CJI B R Gavai, who in July 2025 said that instances of corruption and misconduct within the judiciary "inevitably have a negative impact on public confidence". "However, the path to rebuilding this trust lies in the swift, decisive and transparent action taken to address and resolve these issues... Transparency and accountability are democratic virtues," he is quoted as saying. The revised textbook has been developed in line with the National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education, as NCERT continues to roll out new books for classes 1 to VIII.

For Indian medical students in Iran, it's matter of life or exam

Sugandha.Jha@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Following the Centre's advisory asking Indians to leave Iran amid escalating tensions and the possibility of a US strike, hundreds of Indian medical students find themselves torn between returning home for safety and facing academic setbacks if they miss crucial examinations scheduled in early March, mandatory for the continuation of their degrees. Estimates from student groups suggest that 1,000-1,500 Indian students are currently in Iran for medical education, with a significant number at key institutions like Tehran University of Medical Sciences.

According to several students, the basic sciences (Olum-e-Paye) examination and pre-internship test — both mandatory govt assessments in Iran's medical education system — are set for March 5. These exams determine whether students can progress from pre-clinical study to clinical training and hospital postings, and are held only twice a year. Missing them could mean losing up to six months of academic progress, as the next cycle will only take place in the second half of the year, significantly delaying their five-and-a-half-year medical degree.

The students have highlighted that this is the second time they are grappling with such uncertainty. Many faced disruptions when the Israel-Iran conflict flared last year, leaving them in an increasingly anxious academic environment.

Missing NEET aspirant found dead in canal

Kota: A 24-year-old NEET aspirant missing from his Kota hostel since last week was found dead in a canal over 50 km away in Baran. Lokesh Dangi's parents on Tuesday said he slipped into the canal while bathing and did not allege foul play. TNN

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Jalgaon City Municipal Corporation, Jalgaon invites e- Tender for the selection of Agency to provide Bus Conductors for daily operations of E buses in Jalgaon city area. The cost of work is Rs.200217600.00/- The detailed tender document is available at https://mahatenders.gov.in from 23.02.2026 The right to accept or reject any or all tenders is reserved by the Commissioner Jalgaon City Municipal Corporation.

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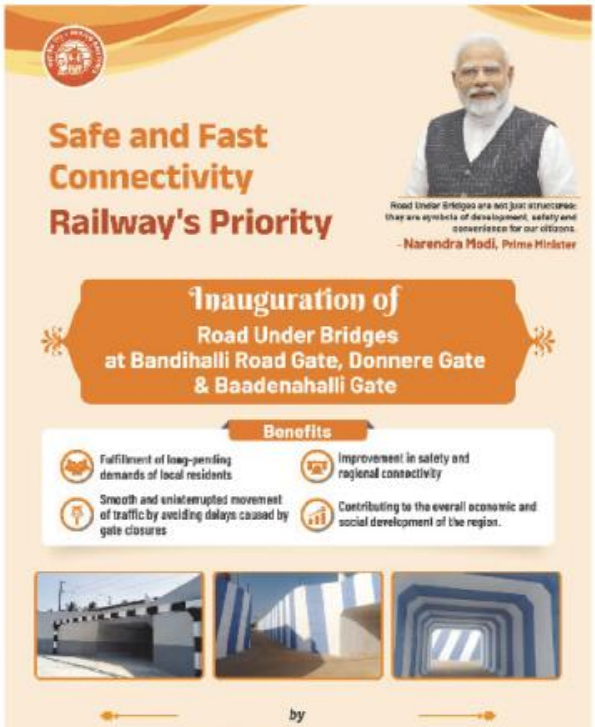

Aviation regulator mulls stricter fines, safety ranks for charter ops

Move Aimed At Enforcing Zero-Tolerance Policy: DGCA

Saurabh.Sinha
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Joined by two crashes involving small charter aircraft within a month that killed 12 people, India may soon rank non-scheduled operator permit (NSOP) or charter and private jet operators based on their safety record.

While this ranking is proposed to be released on the Directorate General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA) website, operators will now mandatorily have to disclose "critical safety information on their websites, including aircraft age, maintenance history and pilot experience."

This will be done to ensure people are "fully informed about the standards" of the aircraft they charter.

Also, there will now be stricter penalties for operators violating norms regarding aircraft or crew utilisation. While pilots found violating flight duty time limitations (FDTL) or attempting to land below safety minima may face license suspensions of up to five years, operators not meeting compliance standards will have their licenses suspended.

The regulator Tuesday metal NSOP or charter/private jet operators to "address a recent surge in aviation incidents" and emphasise on "critical need for increased focus on safety." Non-adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs), inadequate flight planning, and training deficiencies were identified and the primary cause of accidents at this meeting.

Following the meet, the DGCA issued "new measures aimed at enforcing a zero-tolerance policy toward safety compromises within the NSOP sector."

Prioritising safety over commercial interests: The regulator has directed that safety must supersede all commercial considerations, charter commitments or VIP movements. It reaffirmed that the pilot-in-command's decision to divert, delay or cancel a flight for safety reasons is final and must be respected by operators without commercial consequences.

Enhanced oversight and accountability: Apart from DGCA doing safety ranking of NSOPs and the latter disclosing their fleet and crew information, the regulator will conduct increased random cockpit voice recorder (CVR) audits and cross-verify fuel records, and technical logs to detect unauthorised operations or falsifying of data.

"Accountable managers and senior leadership will be held personally responsible for systemic non-compliances, safety lapses cannot simply be blamed on pilots," the regulator says. There will now be increased monitoring of older aircraft and those undergoing ownership changes. NSOPs that run their own maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) facilities will be audited. "Those found lacking adequacy will be required to outsource maintenance to approved organisations."

The regulator has found weather-related accidents are "often the result of poor judgment rather than unpredictability of weather." Operators are mandated to establish real-time weather update systems and strict compliance of established SOPs. Additionally, recurrent training for pilots must have greater emphasis on weather awareness strategies and decision-making in uncontrolled environments.

To address systemic weaknesses in decision-making and to ensure operational discipline, the regulator is implementing several immediate measures.

A senior official who was at the meeting said: "The message is clear to NSOP operators: Either operate with 100% compliance of all norms or surrender your licence and go home. They have to fall in line or be out of business."

While pilots found violating flight duty time limitations or attempting to land below safety minima may face license suspensions of up to five years, operators not meeting compliance standards will have their licenses suspended

2 planes had taken off from Ranchi minutes before crash

New Delhi: Two aircraft, one each of Air India and IndiGo, had taken off safely from Ranchi Monday night around the same time as the ill-fated air ambulance that crashed soon after getting airborne.

After climbing to 6,000 feet, the pilots of the air ambulance had sought weather deviation from Kolkata ATC and then the Beechcraft C90 aircraft VT-AJV crashed.

Ranchi was having bad weather in terms of rains and thunder storm at that time, with cumulonimbus (thunderstorm) clouds at 3,000 feet.

An IndiGo aircraft had taken off eight minutes before the air ambulance crashed.

"After getting airborne and in a couple of minutes when the IndiGo aircraft was about 32 km away from Ranchi airport, it had requested a right turn to avoid weather," sources said.

Unfortunately, the small air ambulance crashed just eight minutes after the relatively bigger airliners had flown away safely in this weather. The ill-fated Beechcraft C90 of Redbird Airways Pvt Ltd was operating as an air ambulance from Ranchi to Delhi. — **Saurabh Sinha**

Ahd Metro, Srinagar airport extension, 3 rail projects get nod

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The cabinet Tuesday approved three multi-tracking railway projects, extension of Ahmedabad Metro and a new integrated airport terminal in Srinagar with a total investment of Rs 11,306 crore. The cabinet also approved an increase in MSP for raw jute.

Announcing the decisions, I&B minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the railway projects — doubling of Gondia-Jabalpur track and laying of third and fourth lines on Punarukh-Kiul and Gamharia-Chandil corridors — will increase Indian Railways' network by about 307 km and will enable the railways to transporter to introduce 38 more express and passenger trains.

The total investment in these projects, passing through eight districts across Maharashtra, MP, Bihar and Jharkhand, will be around Rs 9,072 crore and these will be completed by 2030-31.

Vaishnaw also announced development of the Civil Enclave at Srinagar airport at an estimated cost of Rs 1,677 crore. "People want to visit the Valley, and there is high demand for air traffic" he said.

In an official release, govt said the cabinet approved extension of Ahmedabad Metro at a cost of around Rs 1,067 crore. It will be completed in four years. This extended corridor is expected to benefit approximately 25,700 passengers in 2029.

Govt approves equity investment hike of PowerGrid

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs Tuesday approved a proposal to increase the equity investment threshold of public sector enterprise Powergrid from Rs 5,000 crore to Rs 7,500 crore per subsidiary, enabling it to bid for capital-intensive transmission projects. It will allow Powergrid to expand investments in its core business and support the evacuation of renewable energy capacity, helping achieve the 2030 target of 500 GW from non-fossil fuel-based sources. TNN

British Airways team in Nagpur for aircraft checks

▸Continued from page 1

The passengers were shifted to a premium hotel, and a British Airways engineering team arrived in Nagpur late evening.

It was learnt that the airlines had contacted Air India's maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) depot at Mihan-SEZ and sought technical help. However, the airlines did not revert to MRO's query on the aircraft's technical specifications. The grounded plane also had to cover the crew's mandatory rest hours, sources said.

On the GPS reset, sources said it was the mechanism that guided the aircraft from point to point. Though not much was divulged by the airline, it needed recalibration before take-off. Last week, the BA aircraft flew to Portland, New Orleans, Abu Dhabi and Delhi before finally reaching Nagpur, as per data on a flight-tracking app.

"Adverse weather conditions in Hyderabad led to diversion of the aircraft to Nagpur," a British Airways spokesperson said.

EMERGENCY LANDING

Cervical cancer second most common among Indian women

▸Continued from page 1

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among Indian women, which causes nearly 80,000 new cases and over 42,000 deaths annually. Persistent infection with high-risk HPV types, particularly 16 and 18, accounts for more than 80% of cases. The move follows substantiated emphasis at the highest level. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has repeatedly highlighted cervical cancer prevention, calling for vaccination, early screening and affordable treatment, including at the Quad Cancer Moonshot event in September 2024.

Unlike routine immunisation under the Universal Immunisation Programme, the HPV drive will be conducted as a special campaign on designated Immunisation Days.

The vaccine, Gardasil, protects against HPV types 16 and 18, along with 6 and 11. Govt has committed 2.6 crore doses, with about 1.1 crore already delivered. Officials estimate roughly 1.15 crore doses will be needed annually to cover girls turning 14 each year. Globally, over 300 million doses of the vaccine have been administered, with studies showing 95% to 100% effectiveness against cervical cancer caused by vaccine-covered strains.

Family paid ₹6L in advance for air ambulance flight

▸Continued from page 1

The family had been struggling since the Covid-induced lockdown six years ago. In 2004, Maoists killed Sanjay's father.

Sanjay and Archana's two teenage sons — Shivam (13) and Shubham (17) — have barely uttered a word since the latest tragedy to befall their family. Their great-grandfather, Baleshwar Sahu, breaks down every time someone talks about Sanjay.

A relative said the family paid Rs 6 lakh in advance for the air ambulance flight and borrowed Rs 2 lakh from someone in Lohkar. "Who could have imagined they were paying for a journey to death rather than life," a relative said.

The family of 34-year-old anaesthetist Dr Vikas Kumar Gupta, posted at Ranchi Sadar hospital, said he wasn't supposed to be on that flight until a request came in at 5pm. "He didn't think twice. For him, the patient always came first," a relative said. Vikas, a native of Mainka village in Bihar's Aurangabad, had been part of multiple air evacuations. "I spoke to him minutes before the aircraft took off. Main barbad ho gaya (I am finished)," his father Bajrangi Prasad Gupta said.

Vikas's wife Meena Kumari is an SBI employee in Ranchi. They have an eight-year-old son.

Dev Sahay Bhagat, an executive engineer with the rural works department in Chatra, was in his native village of Lati when he received news of the crash. One of the two pilots was his son Vivek Vikas Bhagat, 28.

Vivek, who had logged 1,300-odd flying hours, had applied for leave from Feb 27 and was "excited" about a friend's upcoming wedding, his family said. The co-pilot of the aircraft, Sarvajdeep Singh, was a resident of Amritsar with over 300 flying hours to his name. A fire-member technical committee constituted by DGCA and three officials of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) arrived in Jharkhand on Tuesday to investigate the crash near Simaria in Chatra district. The district administration sealed the site till the team's arrival. The state govt has also ordered its own probe into the incident.

CM Hemant Soren sent state health minister Irfan Ansari to Chatra to oversee a separate probe into the charter flight company's aircraft registration, airworthiness certificates, DGCA regulatory compliance, maintenance schedule, operational clearance and the pilots' flying experience.

In Kolkata, ATC officials said the pilots did not report any distress call before the aircraft went off the radar at 7.54pm Monday.

Minutes before the crash, the captain sought permission for "deviation due to inclement weather," they said.

A team of DGCA investigates the site where a Delhi-bound air ambulance crashed on Monday night, in Chatra on Tuesday

ECI to publish supplementary voter lists after Feb 28

▸Continued from page 1

The order came from a bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi after the Calcutta HC CJ informed that though 294 serving and retired district judges and additional district judges have been assigned SIR work, they would take at least 80 days to scrutinise documents of 50 lakh voters even if each judicial officer dedicated 250 cases daily.

The bench allowed the Calcutta HC CJ to draft judicial officers in the state with three years' experience for SIR work and said if more additional hands are required to complete the task expeditiously, then he could requisition similarly experienced judicial officers from neighbouring Jharkhand and Odisha.

Significantly, the bench said EC will be publishing the final voter list on Feb 28 containing the names of all those who have been verified. However, after process of verifying the 50 lakh voters' documents along with claims would take some time, EC would be publishing supplementary voter lists after Feb 28.

SC said the 11 documents notified by EC as well as with Class 10 examination admit card along with marksheet would be considered valid to claim inclusion in voter list, while making clear yet again that Aadhaar would be used only for identification purposes. "There is no question of Aadhaar card being used to claim citizenship," the bench said, adding that only cases of voters who have submitted their documents by Feb 14 will be verified by the judicial officers while determining their claim for inclusion in the voter list.

Invoking its extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution, the CJI-led bench said it had the supplementary voter lists would be deemed to be part of the final list published on Feb 28. SC asked EC to bear the expenses towards travel, lodging and honorarium of the judicial officers who would be coming from Jharkhand and Odisha.

'Let judiciary not decide amendments in RP Act'

▸Continued from page 1

Senior advocate Arvind Datar said putting Note on the ballot as a candidate would discourage the candidates with money and muscle power to make their opponents withdraw from the contest.

Attorney general R Venkataramani said when voting is not a fundamental right how could a PIL under Article 32, which is the recourse to approach SC directly in case of violation of fundamental rights, be maintainable. "Let judiciary not decide what amendments are to be carried out in the RP Act. It is for Parliament to decide if any deficiency is required to be remedied or any amendment is to be carried out," said the AG.

The bench said it is the educated and well-off people, who do not come out in large numbers to vote, which is in stark contrast to people in rural areas where voting day resembles a festival that everyone celebrates by exercising their franchise. The Union govt in its affidavit had opposed the PIL and said, "Nota option is not a person which has been duly nominated at any election, hence cannot be held to be a candidate under the Representation of People Act, 1951. 'Nota' might not to be given an artificial personality."

'Shorter period of police custody' enough for investigation

▸Continued from page 1

The court ruled "a shorter period of police custody" would be enough for the investigation while also protecting the accused man's rights. The judge said Chib can meet his counsel during questioning, as allowed under law, as long as it does not interfere with the investigation.

Also in a separate order on the accused's application for a copy of the FIR, Judge Ravi allowed the plea, observing that the "applicant cannot prepare defence without foundational document, causing irreparable prejudice." The court held that withholding the FIR violated Section 230 of the BNSS and the safeguards under Article 21 of the Constitution, added that giving a copy would not harm the investigation, especially now that the case has moved to the Crime Branch.

The investigating officer had withheld the FIR copy on the ground that it was a sensitive matter, a justification the court found untenable.

According to Delhi Police, Chib was the "main conspirator and mastermind" behind the February 20 protest at Bharat Mandapam. They say anti-national slogans were raised and an attempt was made to create a riot-like situation. Police claimed that, in conspiracy with Sharjeel Imam, Raman Yadav, Narsimha Yadav, Ajay Kumar Yadav and others, he obstructed and assaulted police officials on duty.

Public Prosecutor Atul Srivastav argued that although Chib was not "physically present at the spot, he was in constant communication and monitoring developments". He submitted that custodial interrogation was necessary to unravel the conspiracy, analyse digital evidence, trace funding for the protest, and recover remaining material. While Chib's counsel opposed the claim, the court disagreed. "The material cited so far, prima facie indicate that the role attributed to the present accused is that of a person who operated from behind the scenes by giving directions and monitoring the protest," Judge Ravi stated. It further observed that "at this stage of remand, such material cannot be discarded merely on the ground that the accused was not physically present at the place of occurrence."

Woman raped in front of fiancé in Assam; 1 held

BS Goswami | TNN

Silchar: A group of men allegedly gang-raped a 25-year-old woman infront of her fiancé on Ramnagar bypass road in Assam's Silchar last week. Police registered a case and arrested one accused, officials said Tuesday. The survivor stated that the alleged crimes occurred on Feb 19 night, when she and her fiancé were travelling by car via Silchar bypass. The couple stopped near Changlaorie Road area, and her fiancé briefly stepped out of the vehicle.

Meanwhile, the group of perpetrators arrived in another vehicle and allegedly intercepted the couple. The accused dragged her fiancé away and restrained him before gang-raping her, she stated in her complaint, adding that nobody was present nearby to intervene.

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Chief Engineer/O&M (P&P Cell-II), GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat-151111 Distt. Bathinda invites E-tender for the Procurement of 5 Nos. 24V, 1400AH Battery Banks of Stage-2, GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat. Quantity as per NIT. For detailed NIT & tender Specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 23-02-2026 from 17:00 hrs. onwards.
Note : Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in
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Rate for Construction of Various Roads under DRFT scheme are invited from interested bidder upto time 3.30 date 13.02.2026 to time 18.00 date 20.02.2026. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://sikar.eproc.gov.in, http://eproc.raj.nic.in) of the state and PWD department website. The approximate value of the procurement is Rs. 1377.61 Lacs.
Notice No.:- PWD/22/2026/23
UTM No:- PWD/2026/SCD/2026/2, PWD/2026/SCD/2026/3, PWD/2026/SCD/2026/4, PWD/2026/SCD/2026/5, PWD/2026/SCD/2026/6
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Addl. SE Grid Construction Division PSPCL Patiala invites 20 Nos. e-Tender for "for outsourcing of ETC of 04 No. Additional 20 MVA Power Transformers along with bay equipments related works (at 66 KV S/S New Nabha, Sarajpur, Hasanpur and Bahlolpur) on partial turnkey mode under RDSS Scheme under Grid Construction Division, Patiala. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 24.02.2026 (06:00 PM onwards).
Note : Corrigendum and amendments, if any, will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in
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No./1618/22/D-12/MPRRDA/2026 Bhopal, Dated : 24.02.2026
AMENDMENT No.-1 To SHORT NIT No. 1758 (DPR CONSULTANCY OF BRIDGES)
This is to notify all prospective bidders that the name of the work/tender mentioned in the Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) for tender number 1758/22/D-12/Eng.DPR/2026 has been revised as follows:
Item Details
Existing Tender Name DPR CONSULTANCY OF BRIDGES under PMGSY-III
Revised Tender Name DPR CONSULTANCY OF BRIDGES under PMGSY-IV
All other terms, conditions, and dates mentioned in the original tender document and the newspaper advertisement shall remain unchanged. For more details, please visit website http://mptenders.gov.in :
M.P. Madhyam/124619/2026 CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (Tender)

BJP wants 38 seats, AIADMK to offer 25; Modi visit to be show of unity

Julie.Mariappan@timesofindia.com

Chennai: After winning four of the 20 assembly seats it contested in the 2021 election as an AIADMK ally, BJP is pressing for a larger share of seats this time. BJP functionaries told TOI they would seek "at least one seat per district" (the state has 38 districts). AIADMK functionaries, meanwhile, said the party was willing to offer its prime ally 25 seats.

Functionaries of both the parties said they would remain united, and the unity would be on show during PM Narendra Modi's visit to Madurai on March 1 and a public rally in Thanjavur on March 11.

A senior AIADMK functionary said BJP's national leadership was keen on getting constituencies that had high chances of winning rather than negotiating for a higher number of seats. "On that basis, we are willing to give them 25 seats. The number may go up to 30, depending on the choice of seats and the final number of allies," he said.

"AIADMK will have an alliance only with a party that has a name and symbol," said a former minister. AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami will campaign in Madurai and Poonamallee on Wednesday and in Tambaram and Pallavaram on Thursday.

Aluminium, steel, automobiles and auto parts will continue to face 50% product-specific levy

▸Continued from page 1

Exporters are keeping their fingers crossed.

"Let things stabilise, there are a lot of ifs and buts. There is a lot of uncertainty. Some clarity is required on diamonds given that they were treated differently under the agreements with the UK and EU," said The Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council executive director Sabyasachi Ray. The confusion and the flip flop by Trump meant that some of the diamond consignments were held back "even the US customs didn't know what the final levy was. So, we sent some stuff today, but the duty is quite high," said a Mumbai-based exporter.

When it comes to jewellery, a 5.5% MFN tariff is applicable to all countries and so is the 10% additional duty. Besides, with Chinese exports facing action under section 301, Ray said, some goods from across the border face 25% additional tariff. For most other sectors, the reduction is a reason to cheer as exports from the country were subject to 50% tariffs, including a 25% penalty for purchase of Russian oil by Indian refiners. Although the 25% penalty was removed at the start of the month, the remaining levy was to come down to 18% as part of the interim framework for a bilateral trade agreement.

"The 30% US tariff, though a concern, is significantly lower than the higher duties India and exporters have faced earlier, placing them in a relatively better position. Since it is applied uniformly across countries, our competitive standing remains largely unaffected. A supportive exchange rate further cushions the impact, enabling exporters to remain resilient and competitive in the US market," said Fieo director general Ajay Sahai. While goods such as pharma and electronics were exempt from additional tariffs during the days of reciprocal tariffs, there are others such as aluminium, steel and automobiles and auto parts that will continue to face 50% product-specific levy under section 232.

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Acing It Yet Feeling Stuck?

Effort Without Direction Leads To Exhaustion, Not Growth. Pause And Ask If You Are Moving In The Right Direction

By Rajarshi Ganguli

For decades, career progression followed an unspoken contract: deliver consistently, gain experience, and growth would follow. That contract has now weakened. Organisations today are faster, flatter, far more fluid and are used to continuously bracing for uncertainty. Roles evolve more quickly than titles, and expectations shift without always being articulated.

As a result, performance alone is no longer enough.

Organisations still reward outcomes, but they increasingly look for judgment, influence, and readiness for complexity. Many professionals excel at execution but struggle to articulate their broader impact. They deliver results, yet find it difficult to answer crucial questions like:

- What am I known for beyond my current role?
- How do leaders see my readiness for taking on larger responsibility?

This gap creates a frustrating paradox. You are busy, but not always visible. Reliable, but not distinctive. Capable, but somehow not considered "ready."

Adding to this unease is the pressure to stay relevant. Professionals are constantly told to reskill, learn new tools, adapt to new technologies, and keep pace with change. While learning is essential, it has also become exhausting. Many people accumulate certifications without having clarity on how those skills translate into career movement. Learning feels necessary, yet insufficient.

Comparison deepens the anxiety. Career success is now publicly visible. Promotions, role changes, and success stories scroll past daily. Even grounded professionals begin to question their progress.

What makes this anxiety particularly difficult is the absence of clear feedback. Managers often say, "You're doing well," without explaining what well means for the next level of growth.

From an organisational perspective, this is a silent risk. When capable employees feel stuck despite strong performance, disengagement does not immediately manifest as attrition. It appears quietly through reduced ambition, lower risk-taking, emotional withdrawal from stretch opportunities.

Breaking free from this new career anxiety requires a conscious shift.

1. Professionals must move from asking, "Am I doing my job well?" to "Am I doing the right work for where I want to go career-wise?" Every role has two dimensions: execution and evolution. Execution keeps you effective today. Evolution prepares you for tomorrow. Many careers stall because the second dimension is ignored.

2. Visibility must be intentional. This is not about self-promotion, but about making thinking visible. Leaders are noticed not just for what they deliver, but for how they frame problems, connect dots, and anticipate challenges. Contribution beyond one's immediate scope matters.

3. Waiting for annual appraisals is no longer enough. Career clarity must be actively sought with questions such as:

- What capabilities must I demonstrate for the next role?
- What decisions should I start taking independently?
- Where does my impact need to expand?

These conversations may feel uncomfortable, but uncertainty is far more damaging in the long run.

4. Finally, organisations and leaders must recognise this silent anxiety. Career paths may not be linear, but they must be visible. Employees do not expect guarantees; they expect honesty. Clear expectations, meaningful coaching, and realistic timelines reduce uncertainty far more effectively than motivational slogans ever can.

(The author is president and global HR head, Aileron Laboratories)

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU PORT AUTHORITY
Special Economic Zone

CORRIGENDUM

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority Special Economic Zone (JNPA SEZ) had invited application for different posts vide newspaper advertisement dated 20/11/2025. In continuation for the said advertisement, the post of 'Chief Fire Officer (CFO)' is re-designated as 'Fire Superintendent' with modified qualification, experience and scope of work. Kindly take note of the same and the applications (hard copy) are re-invited for the said re-designated post only. The detailed advertise may please be accessed through website https://jnpaport.gov.in (click on vacancy link). The applicants who have already applied for CFO post earlier may re-apply, if eligible, as per revised eligibility criteria.
The application (hard copy) should be addressed to Chief Executive Officer, JNPA-SEZ, Uidhram Bhawan, Navi Mumbai - 400707. The last date of submission of application along with the copies of documents as stated above is 09/03/2026 05:5 PM.
Further, this is to notify that as per the earlier newspaper advertisement dated 20/11/2025, the recruitment for the post of Manager (HR) and Chief Manager (Finance) stands withdrawn.
The shortlisted candidates for the post of 'Fire Superintendent' can be called for interview which shall be notified in due course, separately to concern accordingly.

For Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority - Special Economic Zone (JNPA SEZ)

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How diabetes challenge in India has moved beyond types 1 & 2

Advances in genetic & clinical research have led to several subtypes being discovered, each with a distinct impact on the body

Kamini.Mathai@timesofindia.com

Until the 1970s, diabetes diagnosis was pretty much black and white — juvenile or adult onset, Type 1 or Type 2. But today, doctors are looking at a spectrum of 10 or so subtypes refined by genetic and clinical classifications.

But how much does a subtype really matter when Type 2 accounts for nearly 90% of cases (especially in India) and Type 1 for about 2%, with the rest being exceedingly rare? Neonatal diabetes, for instance, affects only one in four lakh newborns.

For Susanta Das, it mattered. His daughter Ivana was that one in four lakh.

Eleven years ago, Susanta was told that 28-day-old Ivana, diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, would not survive the month. A street vendor, he went from hospital to hospital, selling his home and land, to keep her alive. Ivana survived the month, and the next. Doctors told him that as long as Ivana received five insulin injections a day (costing Rs 20,000 a month), she would live. "I had no money left, no idea what to do," says Susanta.

"Ivana was brought to our Kolkata centre when she was three months old," says endocrinologist Dr V Mohan, chairman of Madras Diabetes Research Foundation. "We suspected neonatal diabetes, a rare genetic form seen in babies under six months. If identified, insulin can be stopped, and the child switched to an inexpensive sulfonylurea tablet," adds Dr Mohan, who offers free genetic testing for neonatal diabetes children referred from any hospital in India.

Eleven years later, Ivana's sugar levels are stable on one tablet a day. "I have spent just Rs 6,000 on treatment over the past 10 years," says Susanta, who had in the initial months spent Rs 10 lakh.

Going by WHO's classification, there is Type 1, Type 2, gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM), and 'other types', says Dr Nihal Thomas, head of endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism department at Christian Medical College, Vellore. While 'other types' include monogenic diabetes, pancreatic diabetes, drug-induced and endocrine causes, 14 recognised forms of MODY (maturity-onset diabetes of the young), inherited syndromes such as lipodystrophies, hybrid forms like ketosis-prone diabetes, and steroid-induced diabetes.

The list continues to grow, as does research, especially in India, which is ranked in the top two globally in the number of adults with diabetes.

Dr Thomas is part of an international working group researching Type 5 diabetes, a malnutrition-related form that was recognised by International Diabetes Federation (IDF) at the World Diabetes Congress in April 2025, reviving a category first described more than 70 years ago. He says globally, Type 5 may affect millions, particularly in parts of South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and other regions where childhood malnutrition is common.

"Type 5 was confused with Type 1 and Type 2. But there are differences. One of two with Type 5 may respond to tablets, while those with early Type 2 may be more insulin resistant," says Dr Thomas. "Adults with Type 5 diabetes have better beta-cell reserve than those with Type 1, but the amount of insulin required for Type 1 is generally more than for those with Type 5. If treated incorrectly with insulin, the consequences can be serious. Which is why getting the type right matters," says Dr Thomas.

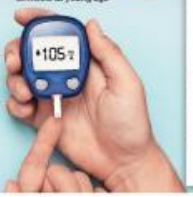
Dr Mohan, meanwhile, is leading studies on early GDM with IDF. "GDM is usually screened at 24 to 28 weeks," he says, adding that in India, about one in four women at govt clinics has been diagnosed with the condition. "But we believe that about half of them may have early GDM (before 20 weeks of pregnancy) and are being missed by current screening norms. Identifying it earlier can help prevent complications in mother and baby." A new IDF consensus statement on early GDM, chaired by Dr Mohan, is expected to be published this year.

While early GDM and Type 5 are among the newer classifications, for long, there has been another form plaguing the south Indian population, especially those in Kerala: Type 3C diabetes — a pancreatic form of the disease — usually first picked up by gastroenterologists rather than diabetologists. "In Type 3C, the endocrine glands in the pancreas, which produce insulin, and the exocrine glands that produce digestive enzymes are both affected. So, you must treat the diabetes and the malabsorption simultaneously," says Hyderabad-based Dr Nageshwar Reddy of AIG Hospitals, former president of World Endoscopy Organisation. "Those with this type usually have abdominal pain, diarrhoea and severe weight loss. They assume it's a gastric issue, which is why they come to us. But these symptoms, along with wildly fluctuating sugars — 400 one moment, 60 the next — are characteristic as both insulin and glucagon regulation are lost."

Decades ago, Type 3C was so common in Kerala that it was called Kerala pancreatitis and believed to have been caused by eating too much tapioca. "That theory has now been debunked. A mutation known as SPINK1 (genetic change that increases risk of chronic pancreatitis) is thought to be behind it," says Dr Reddy, who has seen more than 10,000 cases. "That is why we speak today of the importance of precision diabetes, of zeroing in on the exact type and even subtype to ensure the right treatment," says Dr Mohan. "To a patient, a precise diagnosis of diabetes can feel like a miracle."

THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

- **Type 1:** Autoimmune, destroys insulin-producing cells
- **Type 2:** Lifestyle-related, marked by insulin resistance. Subtypes are severe insulin deficient (needs drugs to improve insulin secretion) and insulin resistant (needs insulin sensitiser like Metformin)
- **Type 1.5:** Called LADA (Latent Autoimmune Diabetes in Adults), it initially resembles Type 2 but progresses to insulin dependence
- **Type 3C:** Triggered by chronic pancreatitis. Requires insulin plus enzyme replacement; Type 3 is linked to brain insulin resistance that triggers Alzheimer's disease
- **Type 5:** Impaired insulin secretion in lean, malnourished people
- **Monogenic forms:** Rare (about 4%), caused by single gene mutations. Includes 14 recognised forms of Maturity-Onset Diabetes of the Young (MODY)
- **Gestational diabetes:** Develops during pregnancy
- **Neonatal diabetes:** Seen before 6 months, roughly one in 4 lakh births
- **Lipodystrophies:** Rare inherited disorder with severe insulin resistance, fatty liver. Can lead to liver disease, cirrhosis at young age



Diabetes on the world map

India: Type 2 (nearly 90%), Type 1 (about 2%) and gestational diabetes (reported in 25-30% of pregnancies in some govt clinics) Type 3C, or fibrocalculous pancreatic diabetes, once highly prevalent in Kerala (15% of diabetes cases) & now linked to a gene mutation

Western countries: Alcohol-related pancreatitis more common, contributing to Type 3C. Gestational diabetes is 6-8%

Scandinavian countries: Higher prevalence of Type 1, around 38% in Finland. Reason unknown

Black African populations: Ketosis-prone diabetes. Can be eventually managed like Type 2

LATEST IN HEALTH RESEARCH

Quality of food defines heart health, not just carbs or fat

The kind of food people choose while on a low-carb or low-fat diet is what determines heart health rather than just cutting those macros, a new study published in JACC (Journal of American College of Cardiology) has found. According to ScienceDaily, researchers looked at around 2 lakh US adults over three decades to find that they followed low-fat and low-carb diets in very different ways. Those choosing plant-based food, whole grains and healthy fats had a far lesser chance of congenital heart disease than those going for animal fat and protein, and refined carbs.

'Dancing molecules' could help treat spinal injuries

Researchers from Northwestern University in US grew tiny human spines in lab dishes and found that they can heal after injury with a therapeutic peptide treatment (KVAV-PA liquid) nicknamed 'dancing molecules', a breakthrough that could help treat spinal cord injuries that cause paralysis, reports ScienceAlert. The study, reported in Nature Biomedical Engineering, had researchers growing 3mm wide spinal cord organoids over several months. Once mature, some were cut and others compressed, simulating traumatic injuries. The peptide treatment liquid healed the scars and regrew nerve cells.

Fingertip lost in freak accident rebuilt using patient's own tissue

Novel reconstructive surgery to fix a problem that was deemed 'unsolvable'

Dr Pankaj Jindal

"The day my finger was amputated, my whole world collapsed," said the 23-year-old man on a visit to my clinic in Sept 2024, nearly six months after a freak accident had his finger caught between a slammed door and made him lose the fingertip.

What stood out was not the severity of the injury, but the emotional silence surrounding it. He came expecting to hear exactly what he had heard from several doctors before: that no further treatment was possible or that he should wear a slip-on silicone cap. Despair was written all over his face. After a quick look, when I assured him that his finger could be reconstructed, his eyes lit up. There were tears in his mother's eyes. Both spoke almost simultaneously, "How soon?" After the nitty-gritty was explained, he was taken for surgery in a few days.

Traditional options for fingertip reconstruction are limited and often involve prolonged recovery or complex procedures. For this patient, the goal was modest but meaningful — to restore normalcy quickly without subjecting him to extensive surgery or long rehabilitation.

We deployed a novel reconstructive surgical technique. Using the patient's own finger tissues, the injured finger was reconstructed and regained length and shape over the following months. Like a flip phone, a part of the remaining finger was split open for that. Then, using high magnification and the precision of a goldsmith crafting fine jewellery, the middle bone of the affected finger and the skin covering it were gently sliced into two halves. The front half, which carries its own healthy skin and the underlying bone, was gently reflected distally on a skin hinge at the end of the injured stump of the finger to gain the planned additional length. This formed the new terminal bone, gaining 10-14 mm of finger length.

It may sound easy but requires the highest level of safety as the nerve and blood supply the joint, and the tendon are in close vicinity. To cover this new structure, we borrowed a skin flap from an adjacent finger. The recovery was rapid and smooth, with minimum scarring. It was far superior to artificial fingers or distant tissue grafts.

Complex microsurgery and other mechanical instrument-based techniques have prolonged recovery and rehabilitation with sky-high costs. Our technique can be carried out without hospitalisation if the patients desire. They are back to full functional capacity within just three months.

With the passage of time, the bone regained its original girth. One unexpected but noteworthy benefit was the appearance of the reconstructed fingertip on the back side, which developed a lighter tone resembling a nail. To an onlooker, the finger no longer appeared injured. The physical appearance was impressive and the functional restoration, remarkable. The icing on the cake was the visual transformation.

Seeing a near-normal finger again was a powerful psychological boost for the man who had shut himself off from the world. The reconstructed finger no longer drew even his own attention; his confidence rose meteorically. Today, he has resumed his routine activities and interactions, works comfortably on a computer and in the field, and no longer hides his hand during conversations. His parents said the change was perceptible and a great relief.

Hand injuries are not merely about loss of function. They affect one's whole identity. The hand is always visible. Even a small deformity can affect self-esteem and confidence in some individuals. For unmarried young adults, fears about acceptance, career prospects, and social judgement can become overwhelming.

Dr Pankaj Jindal is hand surgeon with Ruma Memorial Hospital, Pune. He spoke to Steffy Thecor

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MY MOST INTERESTING CASE

TIPS, TRENDS & TECH

KNOW YOUR VITAL STATS

What's your heart risk score? This calculator can tell you

Most cardiac risks stay hidden, manifesting only as a heart attack. Scientists have now come up with a calculator that lets one know decades ahead if there is a future risk of heart disease

What kind of a calculator is it?

It's a free online calculator introduced in a 2025 study published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology. It's an updated version of the American Heart Association's PREVENT (Predicting Risk of Cardiovascular Disease EVENTs) equations tool. The earlier tool estimated a person's 10-year risk of a heart attack or stroke

What can it do?

The new calculator can assess if one can have a cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk in the next **30 years**

It is designed for those aged **30-79 years** without known heart disease

One should ideally use it **once every year**

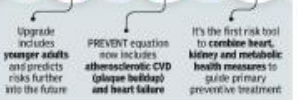
Upgrade includes **younger adults** and predicts risks further into the future

PREVENT equation now includes **atherosclerotic CVD (plaque buildup) and heart failure**

It's the first risk tool to **combine heart, kidney and metabolic health measures** to guide primary preventive treatment

How does it work?

You have to fill in key health metrics such as:



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Three optional predictors to further personalise risk assessment:

1. Urine albumin-creatinine ratio (UACR)
2. Haemoglobin A1c (HbA1c)
3. Social deprivation index (SDI)

WHY IT MATTERS

> We know more and more young adults are facing obesity, diabetes or hypertension, and we want to make sure we're starting that conversation early, and not waiting until someone has a heart attack
>
> **Dr Sadiya Khan,** SENIOR STUDY AUTHOR AND PROFESSOR, NORTHWESTERN MEDICINE

Source: American Heart Association, Time Magazine

Scan here to access the calculator

WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?

Khichdi	1 bowl	Risotto
200-300	CALORIES	350-500
35-45g	CARBS	40-52g
8-14g	PROTEIN	7-10g
3-8g	FAT	15-25g
4-7g	Fibre	1-3g

Khichdi is the quintessential comfort food — rice and lentils, minimal oil or ghee, vegetables and spices boiled together. Risotto is a decadent mix of rice, butter, olive oil, cheese and stock, simmered and finished with cream. Khichdi is gut-friendly, anti-inflammatory and easy to digest. It's higher in protein (thanks to lentils), much higher in fibre, low on fat, and the ghee on top can enhance its healing benefits. But risotto is a high-fat indulgence. Khichdi is everyday fuel. Risotto is a weekend or celebration food best had in small portions.

Source: **Niki Kheda,** clinical nutritionist and author, 40 Cals to Good Health

Email your feedback to **toihealth.plus@timesofindia.com** with Health Plus in the subject line. Please mention your name and city

Breaking the mould: A knee replacement that works around allergies

When a severe allergic reaction ruled out metal implants in patient, AIIMS docs turned to ceramic

Anuja.Jaiswal@timesofindia.com

Knee replacement is today among the most routine surgeries in India. But not so for Dr Sunanda Gupta. Years of crippling arthritis had left the former Safdarjung Hospital professor struggling to walk. Yet, standard metal implants posed a serious risk as she was severely allergic to metals and multiple drugs, so much so that even jewellery and common painkillers triggered reactions. So, surgeons at AIIMS, Delhi opted for a fully ceramic, metal-free knee implant, undersoring how joint replacement is moving towards highly personalised solutions for select patients.

TECHNOLOGY FOR HEALTH

Ceramic implants have been used safely in hip replacements for over two decades, but are still uncommon for knee surgery. Dr Gupta underwent the procedure in November 2025 and is now recovering well. She says the ceramic implant's high biocompatibility and minimal tissue reaction made it the safest option for her, despite its high cost and limited availability.

Fully metal-free implants rare

But her case is the exception, not the rule. Dr Vikrant Mathas, additional professor of orthopaedics at AIIMS, says completely metal-free ceramic knee implants are extremely rare and are reserved for patients who are unwilling or unable to opt even for hypoallergenic alternatives. "Most patients concerned about metal sensitivity can safely receive standard implants with special coatings that prevent direct tissue contact," he explains, adding that only a small minority needs non-standard implants. Besides, ceramic knee implants can crack after a severe fall, though this risk has become uncommon with newer designs, while metal implants do not fracture.

Cost is another major deterrent. Ceramic knee implants can be nearly twice as expensive as standard implants, making them impractical for routine use. "As contacted metal implants work well for the vast majority of patients, ceramic knees are not commonly done in India," Mathas says, describing the AIIMS procedure as necessity-driven rather than trend-setting.

Ceramic just as good as metal

Scientific evidence, however, suggests ceramic knees can perform just as well — in the right patients. An eight-year prospective follow-up study published in 2024 in the Nature's scientific report evaluated a completely metal-free ceramic knee implant used in total knee arthroplasty and found that outcomes were on a par with conventional metal knee implants in terms of function, patient satisfaction, activity levels and overall quality of life.

No allergic reactions were reported in those who received ceramic implants, supporting their use in people with proven metal hypersensitivity. While gradual radiological changes were seen around the tibial component over time, these did not translate into clinical loosening or symptoms. Only one revision surgery occurred — due to trauma rather than implant failure. The study concluded that ceramic knee implants are a safe and effective long-term option for patients with metal allergy, provided proper surgical technique, especially full cementation of ceramic components, is followed.

Amite Pankaj Aggarwal, principal director and head of orthopaedics and joint replacement at Fortis Hospital in Delhi's Shalimar Bagh, says metal allergy to knee implants is rare but possible. Standard implants are typically cobalt-chromium alloys with trace nickel, the most common allergen. When allergy does occur, patients may develop persistent pain, stiffness, rashes or redness weeks to months after surgery and, in some cases, implant loosening that requires revision surgery.

Patients with a history of skin reactions to jewellery or watches should inform their doctors, he advises. They are usually offered either alternative metals or cobalt-chromium implants coated with ceramic layers such as titanium nitride or zirconium oxide, which reduce metal ion release and wear and help extend implant life. Ceramic implants, he adds, are offered only to select patients.

Modern implants a lot safer

Experts also point out that the overall risk of metal allergy is negligible with modern implant materials. Aashish Chaudhry of Aakash Healthcare says advanced cobalt-chromium alloys and titanium nitride-coated implants — often referred to as gold-coated implants — are highly biocompatible and well tolerated, even in patients reporting metal sensitivity. He adds that ceramic remains standard for hips, not knees, where advanced metal alloys continue to be the proven choice.

Doctors agree on one clear takeaway from the AIIMS case: ceramic knee implants are not meant for everyone, but can be life-changing for a tiny subset of patients. Dr Gupta's experience highlights a shift from one-size-fits-all surgery towards implant choices tailored to a patient's biology, risks and lifestyle, even when that path is rare, costlier and more complex.

Why ceramic?

High biocompatibility, minimal tissue reaction, and proven use in hip replacements for over 20 years. However, it's not widely available and costs nearly twice that of standard implants. Can crack after severe trauma and is needed only for a small minority of patients

What doctors say

- **Metal implants:** Most patients with metal sensitivity can use coated metal implants and hypoallergenic alloys
- **Ceramic implants:** Reserved for metal allergy, reactions to standard implants, and failure of hypoallergenic options

Where your career gets its perfect pitch.

L&T's Build India Scholarship.

L&T's Build India Scholarship (BIS) is the perfect launch pad for your career, sponsoring your pursuit of an M Tech in Construction Technology & Management (CTaM) offered by IIT Madras, IIT Delhi, NITK Surathkal & NIT Tiruchirappalli in coordination with L&T. The 24-month course that begins in July 2026, will strengthen you to participate in building the future with us.

ELIGIBILITY: You are eligible if you are pursuing your final year BE/B Tech in core Civil/Electrical Engineering and expected to graduate in 2026 from a recognized Indian University/institute with an academic aggregate of 70% or 7.0 CPGA (out of 10).

AGE: You should not be more than 24 years as on 01/07/2026

SELECTION PROCESS: Candidates who qualify in Written Test (Technical & Aptitude), will be invited for Interview. Final selection for admission to M Tech (CTaM) Programme with BIS will be based on test and interview performance, eligibility in qualifying degree and medical fitness.

SCHOLARSHIP: A stipend of Rs. 13,400/- per month will be paid to you for the duration of the 24-month course. The sponsorship & tuition fees will be paid by L&T directly to the IITs/NITs.

JOIN US: Upon successful completion of the course, you will have an opportunity to build your career with L&T.

For Applying:
https://bis.lntedutech.com/candidate/registration-form
or Scan the QR code

Registered applicants who are shortlisted will be invited for the written test.

N.B. Please read the eligibility guidelines and instructions given on our website thoroughly before applying.

Process Timelines

Activity	Schedule
Last Date for Application	28th March 2026
Written Test	April 2nd week 2026
Interview Process	May 3rd week 2026
Issuance of Sponsorship Letters	June 2nd week 2026
Institute Onboarding	Between July-Aug 2026

Caution: L&T does not charge any fee to candidates at any stage of the recruitment process. For any queries, please write to bis@lntedutech.com

L&T Construction

Regd. Office: Larsen & Toubro Limited, L&T House, N. M. Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai – 400 001, INDIA CIN L99999MH1946PLC004768

MADHYA PRADESH STATE ELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

(Under Department of Science & Technology, Government of Madhya Pradesh), 47-A, Arera Hills, Bhopal, M.P., 462011

IT PROFESSIONALS WANTED AT MPSEDC(I)

Madhya Pradesh State Electronics Development Corporation (MPSEDC), an organization under the Department of Science & Technology, is dedicated to advancing Information Technology in Madhya Pradesh. MPSEDC is currently seeking talented IT professionals for various projects in Bhopal.

S. No.	Position Name	No. of Vacancies	Min. Experience	Upper CTC Limit (in lakh per annum)
1.	Principal Consultant - Technology Management	3	15 Years	36 LPA
2.	Security Tool Manager	1	8 Years	30 LPA
3.	Security Tool Engineer	1	6 Years	21 LPA

For comprehensive details regarding available positions and to apply, please visit our website: **https://mpsedc.mp.gov.in** -> About Us -> Vacancy -> Recruitment - February, 2026

General Terms:
- Candidates are advised to carefully read the instructions on the MPSEDC website before applying.
- Engagements will be for a fixed term period of upto 2 years, with provision for extension based on performance.
- Candidates may apply online through the MPSEDC HR Portal or Naukri.com. Hard copies of CVs will not be entertained.

The last date to receive applications is 27.02.2026

M.P. Madhyam/12155/3/2026

इंजीनियर्स इंडिया लिमिटेड ENGINEERS INDIA LIMITED

(नवरत्न कम्पनी और सूक्ष्म)
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)

Regd. Office: Engineers India Bhawan, 1, Bhikaji Cama Place, New Delhi-110066

India's leading Total Solutions Engineering Consultancy Company, **Engineers India Limited**, a Navratna PSU offers opportunity for dynamic career oriented experienced professionals with the zeal to be a part of this prestigious organisation and contribute towards the nation's growth.

EIL is looking for suitably qualified, experienced and motivated professionals in the following disciplines to partner in its growth story:

Designations	Pay-Scale (₹)	No. of Vacancies*	Reservation Breakup
Junior Secretary	29600-120000	6	3 UR, 1 SC, 2 OBC
Total		6	

*No. of vacancies indicated are only tentative. Reservation and relaxation for PwDs (Persons with Disabilities) shall be as per GOI (Government of India) guidelines.

Please visit the Company's website -*http://www.engineersindia.com* for detailed advertisement. Online submission of application is permitted for eligible candidates on website between 0000 hours on 26.02.2026 till 2359 hours on 12.03.2026.

HRD/Recit./Advt./2025-26/19

TIMES ascent global

Catapult your career

INTERNATIONAL INDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL, RIYADH

P.O. BOX 13748, RIYADH-11414, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Tel: +966 11 2792316 / 2792347,
Website: https://www.ipsr.edu.sa

INVITING APPLICATION FROM INDIAN NATIONALS FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

- PGTs (MALE): Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics
- PGT (FEMALE): Physical Education
- TGTs (MALE): Hindi, Music and English

ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

1. Administrative Officer (MALE)
2. Accountant (MALE)

For detailed list of information on the qualifications, experiences, age and job responsibilities, please visit the school website: **https://www.ipsr.edu.sa**

The candidates are required to make a cover letter with the category specified in the Subject (Eg: TGT / PGT / Administrative role etc.) and submit their complete CV along with all required documents as one SINGLE PDF FILE to **indianrecruitment@ipsr.edu.sa**

Last date of the submission of application is 12th March 2026

"Incomplete application will be rejected"

SBI

State Bank of India
Central Recruitment & Promotion Department
Corporate Centre, Mumbai
Phone: 022-22820427

Scan QR to Apply

Recruitment of Specialist Cadre Officers on Regular / Contract Basis

Applications are invited from eligible Indian citizens for the following post on Regular / Contract basis:

Advertisement No.: CRPD/SCO/2025-26/24 (Regular position)

Name of Post	Number of vacancies	Grade
Manager (Risk Specialist- Climate Risk)	02	MMGS-III
DATE FOR FILING ONLINE APPLICATION & PAYMENT OF FEES: FROM 24.02.2026 to 16.03.2026.		

Advertisement No.: CRPD/SCO/2025-26/25 (Regular position)

Name of Post	Number of vacancies	Grade
Deputy Manager- IT Security Expert	01	MMGS-II
Deputy Manager -Emerging Technology	04	
Deputy Manager -Cyber Security Analyst	02	
Deputy Manager -Incident Management & Forensics	02	
Deputy Manager -Test Engineers	03	
DATE FOR FILING ONLINE APPLICATION & PAYMENT OF FEES: FROM 24.02.2026 to 16.03.2026.		

Advertisement No.: CRPD/SCO/2025-26/26 (Contractual position)

Name of Post	Number of vacancies
Business Analyst	01
DATE FOR FILING ONLINE APPLICATION & PAYMENT OF FEES: FROM 24.02.2026 to 16.03.2026.	

Advertisement No.: CRPD/SCO/2025-26/27

Name of Post	Vacancies	Type
Deputy Manager (IS AUDIT)	43	Regular (MMGS-II)
Deputy Manager (Chartered Accountant - Internal Audit)	61	Regular (MMGS-II)
AVP (IS AUDIT)	12	Contractual
DATE FOR FILING ONLINE APPLICATION & PAYMENT OF FEES: FROM 23.02.2026 to 15.03.2026.		

For eligibility criteria (age, experience, job profile etc.), vacancy details, requisite fees, other details and for online submission of application as well as online payment of application fees log on to Bank's website **https://sbi.bank.in/web/careers/current-openings**. Refer detailed advertisement to ensure eligibility and other details before applying and remitting fees. For any query, please write to us through link "CONTACT US" -> "Post Your Query" which is available on Bank's official website (**https://sbi.bank.in/web/careers/post-your-query**)

Place: Mumbai
Date: 23.02.2026

General Manager (RP & PM)

Financial Services Institutions Bureau

An Autonomous Body of Government of India
Invites applications for the position of

Deputy Managing Director in India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited

For details of Age, Educational Qualifications, Experience/ Service Requirements and other eligibility terms and conditions, please see the advertisement on https://fsib.org.in/ under the "Vacancies & Recommendations" tab.

How to apply: Interested candidates can apply **online** through the link available on https://fsib.org.in/ under the "Vacancies & Recommendations" tab or directly at https://www.research.net/r/dmdiifc2026

Last date of receipt of application: 5:00 pm on 23-March-2026

Note: Further details including corrigendum, if any, shall be published only on the Bureau's website.

St. Xavier's University, Kolkata

Action Area IIIB, New Town, Kolkata-700 160.
INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS

XAVIER SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

DESIGNATION	SUBJECT (SPECIALISATION)
Professor	Computer Sc. & Engg.
Associate Professor	Computer Sc. & Engg. | Mathematics
Assistant Professor	Mechanical Engg. | Electrical Engg. | Computer Sc. & Engg. | Mathematics | Physics | Chemistry | English.

XAVIER BUSINESS SCHOOL

Associate Professor	Management (Business Analytics)
Assistant Professor	Management (Business Analytics)

OFFICER AND OTHER STAFF

Joint Placement Officer | Secretary to the Vice-Chancellor | Personal Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor | Accounts Officer | Laboratory Assistant | Computer Lab Assistant.

For details, please visit www.sxuk.edu.in
Last date of online application: 23.03.2026
Last Date of Submission of Documents (Hard Copy): **25.03.2026**

DELHI METRO RAIL CORPORATION LTD.

(A Joint Venture of Govt. of India and Govt. of Delhi)

INDICATIVE ADVERTISEMENT

Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd., The Lifeline of Delhi, invites application for the following post-

Sl. No.	Designation	No. of post(s)	Pay scale/ Remuneration (In IDA Scale)	Mode of Induction	Last date of Receipt of Application
1.	Maintainer/ Safety	One (01)	₹ 25,000 - 85,000/-	Direct Recruitment Basis	09.03.2026

The advertisement is only indicative. The detailed vacancy notification and particulars regarding the eligibility criterion, qualification, experience, age limit, mode of selection, etc., are available in the **Career Section** of the DMRC website: www.delhimetrorail.com, under **ADVT No. DMRC/PERS/03/HR/2026 (222).**

General Manager (HR) Project
Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd.
Metro Bhawan, Fire Brigade Lane, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi

Advertisement No. : DMRC/HR/3/2026

Mumbai Port Authority

Applications are invited for **04 (03 UR, 01 ST) Class-III** posts of **Hindi Translator Gr. II** on regular basis.

The detailed advertisement is available on MbPA website **www.mumbaiport.gov.in (People & Career/Jobs/ Advertisement menu).** Candidates applying for the said post are required to apply as per the procedure given in the detailed advertisement.

Last date for submission of application and fee payment is **16/03/2026.**

MbPA-03-2025

Manager (HR)

MACLEODS

Macleods Pharmaceuticals Ltd. is one of India's fastest-growing pharmaceutical companies, recognised for its strong presence in therapeutic segments including anti-infectives, cardiovascular, anti-diabetic, respiratory and hormones. With a global footprint across multiple countries, we are committed to deliver high-quality and affordable medicines worldwide.

We are looking for a performance-driven and energetic

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

To lead strategic growth in the Gastro Business by Managing Key Hospitals, Gastroenterologists and Institutional accounts. The role requires strong scientific understanding, strategic account planning and ability to build long-term partnerships with healthcare professionals.

Location

East	West	South	North
• Burdwan • Kolkata • Midnapur • Siliguri • Bhubaneshwar • Cuttack • Patna • Purnia • Ranchi	• Ahmadabad • Jodhpur • Rajkot • Surat • Bhopal • Indore • Nagpur • Raipur • Mumbai (West, Central, South) • Thane • Navi Mumbai • Aurangabad • Kolhapur • Pune	• Bangalore • Mangalore • Chennai • Coimbatore • Madurai • Calicut • Cochin • Guntur • Kottayam • Vizag • Thiruvananthapuram • Hyderabad • Vijayawada	• Amritsar • Bathinda • Chandigarh • Jalandhar • Karnal • Ludhiana • Delhi (South, West, Central, East and North) • Faridabad • Agra • Gurgaon • Jaipur • Dehradun • Meerut • Gaziabad • Kanpur • Lucknow • Noida • Moradabad • Varanasi

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy, Science or related field(Preferred)
- 2-4 years of experience in Gastroenterology division
- Fluent in spoken English and willingness to Travel
- Age Below 28 years

Interested candidates may apply within 5 working days at gastromaxx@macleodspharma.com

Physical Interactions will be Held at **Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Delhi** for above Locations, shortlisted candidates will be informed through email.
Join us in driving excellence and accelerate your career with one of India's leading pharmaceutical organizations.

Macleods Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

Atlanta Arcade, Marol Church Rd, Andheri (East), Mumbai-400059. https://www.macleodspharma.com

Federal Bank

Be one of us!

Come, join the Federal Family.

Designation	Associate Officer (Sales)
Qualification	Graduation
Annual CTC	Up to ₹ 6.70 Lakh
Location	As per recruitment notification
Last Date to Apply	04th March 2026

For more details, visit **federal.bank.in/careers** or scan here

GAIL (India) Limited

(A Govt. of India Undertaking)

GAIL (India) Limited, a Maharatna PSU is looking for committed, vibrant and passionate young Graduate Engineers desirous of joining GAIL as Executive Trainee (ET) in the disciplines of Chemical, Instrumentation, Electrical, and Mechanical by using Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering 2026 (GATE-2026) marks.

On the above matter, GAIL had already published an advertisement in major National Dailies in the month of September, 2025 directing the prospective candidates who wish to apply for the post of Executive Trainee in the above disciplines in GAIL, to first register for GATE-2026 exam in the www.gate2026.iisc.ac.in.

Candidates, who have applied for appearing in GATE-2026 in the relevant papers and received GATE-2026 Admit Card and also meeting the eligibility requirements and other conditions specified in the detailed advertisement hosted on GAIL website may now apply online in GAIL through GAIL website for the relevant post indicating their GATE-2026 Registration Number. Application without valid GATE-2026 Registration Number will be rejected. **The relevant link for submission of online application by the candidates will be made available from 20.02.2026 to 18.03.2026 in the "Careers" Section of GAIL website: https://gailonline.com**

Candidates can view the detailed advertisement for post, category wise vacancy position, eligibility conditions and instructions for filling online application by visiting Careers Section of GAIL website: https://gailonline.com

IMPORTANT DATES:

Opening of portal on GAIL's website for online submission of application by candidates indicating GATE-2026 Registration Number	1100 Hours on 20.02.2026
Last date for submission of online application in GAIL by candidates	1800 Hours on 18.03.2026

For information regarding GATE-2026, interested candidates may log on to official website of GATE-2026 https://gate2026.iisc.ac.in

Regd. Office: GAIL Bhawan, 16, Bhikaiji Cama Place, New Delhi – 110 066 Ph: 011-26120780, Email: corpcomm@gail.co.in
Corporate Identification Number: L40200DL1984GOI018976

SCAN QR CODE TO VISIT 'CAREERS' SECTION ON GAIL WEBSITE

Advt. No.: GAIL/PERSO/12/2026

www.gailonline.com #EnergizingPossibilities Follow us on

GIFT GUJARAT INTERNATIONAL FINANCE TEC-CITY CO. LTD.

Reg. Office: GPS - Building no. 40A, Block 40, Zone 04, Dyan Marg, GIFT City, Gandhinagar 382355, Gujarat, India

Gujarat International Finance Tec-City Co. Ltd. (GIFTCL) is India's first operational smart city and international financial services hub, offering world-class infrastructure and a globally competitive business ecosystem.

Applications are invited from qualified and experienced professionals for the following positions at GIFT City:

- Asst. Vice President - Business Development (multi-cluster) & Strategy
- Asst. Vice President - General Manager -Brand & Communication
- General Manager -Business Development (Finance Cluster)
- Manager -Business Development (Tec-IT/ITeS)
- Manager -Business Development (Capital Market)
- Manager -Business Development (New Age Finance)
- Manager -Content
- Manager -Design
- Asst. Manager -Public Relations & Corporate Communications

The above positions are based at GIFT City, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Interested candidates are encouraged to apply by visiting the "Career Section" of our company website: **www.giftgujarat.in** latest by **10th March 2026**.

For detailed qualifications, experience requirements, and terms, kindly visit the "Careers" section on our website.

Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) a Navratna Company and a premier Indian Public Limited Company in Professional Electronics with a portfolio of over 360 different products in the areas of Military Radars, Naval Systems, Weapon & Fire Control Communication, Homeland Security, Strategic Communication & Unmanned System, Electronic Warfare, Tank Electronics and Electro Optics. BEL has a requirement of Executives Ex-Servicemen (ESM) in ELI GRADE on Fixed Tenure Basis. The details are as under:-

Post Details	No. of posts
Sr. Asst. Engineer, (E-I Grade) on fixed Tenure basis for 15 years	Vishakhapatnam - 02, Mumbai - 04, Kolkata - 01, Chennai - 01 and Agra - 01. (Total -09)
Asst. Security Officer, (E-I Grade) on fixed Tenure basis for 15 years	Jodhpur-01 and Bathinda-01, (Total -02)

For further details, please visit CAREERS link on website http://www.bel-india.in

Phone: 011-41526917

SR. DGM (HR)
DELHI OFFICES

MCL MAHANADI COALFIELDS LIMITED

(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
REPD. ADDRESS: NIRMAL BHAWAN, JAGAMARA, PO. JAGAMARA, DISTT. SUNDERGARH, ODISHA, PIN-769025
Ph.: +91 (0661) 2500016 Fax: (0661) 2500010, CIN: U11042OR1992SGOI003529
Email id: recruitment.mcl@coalindia.in, Website: www.mahanadicoal.in

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE / ADVERTISEMENT

Ref. No.: MCL/HR/Recit./Statutory/123 **Dated: 21/02/2026**

Mahanadi Coalfields Limited, a subsidiary of Coal India Limited, A Govt. of India Undertaking invites ONLINE applications from eligible citizens of India for the following posts. The candidates fulfilling the eligibility criteria may submit their applications by ONLINE MODE ONLY.

TABLE: A

Name of Post	Basic Pay (NCWA-X)	Total Vacancies including Backlog					
		UR	EWS	SC	ST	OBC (NCL)	Total
Jr.Overman, T&S Gr-C	₹ 47330.25 PM	77	18	28	46	22	192
Mining Sirdar T&S Gr-C	₹ 47330.25 PM	176	43	77	80	64	440
Surveyor, T&S Gr-B	₹ 51103.12 PM	8	1	5	14	-	28

Name of Post	Basic Pay (NCWA-X)	BACKLOG			
		SC	ST	OBC (NCL)	Total
Translator (Tr) OL Clerical Gr. II	₹ 41906.51 PM	1	-	-	01
Technician (Pathology) Tr T&S Gr-C	₹ 47330.25 PM	1	-	1	02

[UR = Unreserved, EWS= Economically Weaker Section, SC= Scheduled Caste, ST =Scheduled Tribe, OBC (NCL) = Other Backward Class (Non-Creamy Layer)]

Table B: Showing Position, Functional requirement & Suitable category of Benchmark Disabilities

Name of Post	Physical Requirement	Suitable category of Benchmark Disabilities	Horizontal Vacancies
Translator (Tr) OL Clerical Gr. II	S,SE,RW, MF	a) LV b) D, HH c) OA, OL, BL,OAL, LC, Dw,AAV, MDY d) ASD (M), SLD e) MD involving (a) to (d) above	01
Technician (Pathology) Tr. T&S Gr-C	S, ST, W, SN, MF, RW, SE, H, C	a) D, HH b) OL, BL, Dw, AAV c) ASD (M), SLD d) MD involving (a) to (c) above	02

"Functional Requirement Abbreviations Used: S=Sitting, ST=Standing, W=Walking, SN=Bending, L=Lifting, H=Hearing, C=Communication, MF=Manipulation by Fingers, SE=Seeing, RW=Reading & Writing, C=Communication.

Suitable Category Abbreviations Used: LV=Low Vision, D=Deaf, HH=Hard of Hearing, OA=One Arm, OL=One Leg, BL=Both Leg, OAL=One Arm and One Leg, LC=Leprosy Cured, Dw=Dwarfism, AAV= Acid Attack Victims, MDy=Muscular Dystrophy, ASD(M)=Autism Spectrum Disorder (Mild), SLD=Specific Learning Disability, MI=Mental Illness, MD=Multiple Disabilities.

Detailed Advertisement/Employment Notice in Hindi & English with regard to Qualification, Eligibility criteria, Reservation, Age relaxation, Examination fee and other terms & conditions, start/last date for submission of online applications etc. will be available on MCL's website. **Only Applications submitted through OFFLINE mode shall not be accepted.** Any Addendum/ Corrigendum in this regard will be hosted on MCL's website only.

R-5288

General Manager, (Recruitment)

NISM National Institute of Securities Markets

A Capacity Building Initiative of SEBI

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NISM invites online applications from distinguished academicians, policy professionals, and regulatory experts for the post of Professor to lead its newly established Centre for Regulatory Studies and Corporate Governance.

Appointment: On contract basis for 3 years (extendable subject to performance and Institute's requirements).

Interested candidates may apply online through the **"Recruitment"** section at **www.nism.ac.in.**

Last date for submission of online application: March 15, 2026.

For detailed eligibility criteria and other terms, please visit the NISM website **www.nism.ac.in.**

बाबासाहेब भीमराव अम्बेडकर विश्वविद्यालय
BABASAHEB BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY

(A Central University)

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Advt. No.: BBAU/NT/01/2026 **Dated: 21/02/2026**

BBAU, Lucknow invites online application form from eligible Indian Citizens for the post of **Finance Officer** to be filled by direct recruitment/ deputation for a tenure of five years or till attaining the age of superannuation i.e. 62 years, whichever is earlier.

For details including qualification, experience, age limit, date of commencement & last date of submission of online and hard copy of application form, personal terms & conditions and for filling online application form, please visit University website www.bbau.ac.in.

Any addendum/ corrigendum/ notices/ updates in respect of this shall be posted on University Website only.

REGISTRAR

Vidya Vihar, Rae Bareli Road, Lucknow-226025 (U.P.)
Website: www.bbau.ac.in

RAJASTHAN SAMWAD

(Department of Information and Public Relations, Government Secretariat, Jaipur 302005)
(Telephone & Fax No. 0141-2228098, 2228064, E-mail id - dipro.raj@nic.in, Website - www.emitra.rajasthan.gov.in/rsmcl.emitra)

Corrigendum

With reference to the NIT No. 14 Dated 11.02.2026 for "Bidding Document for THE WORK OF RC MATERIAL HANDLING" it is hereby informed that the last date for submission of Bids has been extended upto 11.03.2026 11:00 PM on e-procurement Portal. The last date for Physical submission of instruments of Bid Security, Processing Fee and Pre-cast Bidding Bond, remains as in the article of NIT. RAJASTHAN SAMWAD paper will be submitted on 12.02.2026 up to 2:00 PM. The Technical Bids will be opened on 13.03.2026 at 4:30 PM.

Raj Samwad/D/26/27140 — Executive Director (Finance)

TAMIL NADU GREEN ENERGY CORPORATION LIMITED

Notice Inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process)

Specification No.	Tender Inviting Authority	Name of Work
CE / NCES / D.Ref No / 2025-26	CE / NCES	Competitive Bidding is invited by TNGECL from prospective bidders for E-Tender for spearheading of the net Wind Power Plant (38.75 MW) owned by TNGECL and development of a Solar Power Plant (38 MW) as a combined Wind-Solar Power Project with the proposal to sell power to TNPDCL Under Tariff Based Competitive Bidding process with BOO model

For Details of Work / Procurement / Due date of Submission / Opening / Viewing and down loading of E-Tenders Please visit Website from https://tntenders.gov.in / tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app for submission of bids. DPR/1069/Tender/2026

RAJASTHAN MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.

(A Govt. of Rajasthan Undertaking)
Gandhi Block, Sensitive Bhawan, Tilak Marg, Jaipur – 302005, India
Phone No: 0141-2228098, 2228064 Website: www.mes.health.rajasthan.gov.in
CIN:U24232RJ2011SGC035087 E-mail : edprmes@rajasthan.gov.in
Ref. No.: F32/435/RMSCL/PROCUREMENT DRUGS/NBB-13/2025-26/3605 Dated:- 16.02.2026

Notice Inviting Short Term E-Bids

S. No.	Item Name / Description	Ref. No	USN	Estimated Value Rs. In Cr.	Time & Last date for bid submission
1	Drugs & Medicines	Ref. No.: F32/435/ RMSCL/PROCUREMENT DRUGS/NBB-13/2025-26/ 3605 Dated:- 16-02-2026	MSCDS2026/ LRC026063	181.68 Crore	26.02.2026 04:00pm

Raj. Samwad/D/26/27033 — Executive Director (Procurement) RMSCL

TAMIL NADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED

Kagithapuram - 639 136, Karur Dist, Tamil Nadu.
Kaithi Nagar, Mondipatti - 621 308, Trichy Dist, Tamil Nadu.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Tender No.	Description	Due date
162601/ 007529	Design, Manufacturing, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of Fire Hydrant System Phase II for KDPPM Project at TNPL Unit-I. Bid issue Date : 11.02.2026	31.03.2026
162601/ 007568	Procurement of Dilute Phosphoric Acid for Unit-I	09.03.2026
162601/ 007543	Procurement of Sodium Hydroxide for Unit-I	10.03.2026
162601/ 007509	Procurement of Sodium Sulphate for Unit-I	11.03.2026
162601/ 007542	Procurement of Sulphur Di-Oxide for Unit-I & II	12.03.2026
162601/ 007549	Procurement of Sulphuric Acid for Unit-I & II	13.03.2026
162603/ 004301	Procurement of Cationic Starch for Board Machine (CCR) at TNPL Unit- II.	30.03.2026
162603/ 004314	Procurement of Water Detention Agent for Board Machine (CCR) at TNPL Unit- II.	16.03.2026
162603/ 004315	Procurement of Lubricant for Board Machine (CCR) of TNPL Unit-II	19.03.2026
162603/ 004316	Procurement of Cross Linker for Board Machine (CCR) of TNPL Unit-II	17.03.2026
162603/ 004317	Procurement of OBA (Slurry/Liquid) for Coating - UWF for Board Machine (CCR) of TNPL Unit-II.	19.03.2026
162603/ 004318	Procurement of Retention and Drainage Aid (Silica Micro Particle) for Board Machine (CCR) of TNPL Unit-II	14.03.2026
162603/ 004319	Procurement of Sodium Bicarbonate (Food Grade) for Board Machine (CCR) of TNPL Unit-II.	19.03.2026
162603/ 004320	Procurement of Alum Slurry Chemical for Board Machine (CCR) of TNPL Unit-II.	20.03.2026
162603/ 004327	Procurement of Acrylic Binder - I for Board Machine (CCR) of TNPL Unit-II.	17.03.2026
162603/ 004329	Procurement of Dry Nip I (Spray Chlorine) for Board Machine (CCR) at TNPL Unit- II.	25.03.2026
162603/ 004330	Procurement of Couple Dried Tape 80 NM (Replaceable) - Length 50 MM for Board - Production - Processed TNPL Unit- I	14.03.2026
162603/ 007534	Procurement of HD Cold Plain Kraft Sheets of various sizes for Unit-I	06.03.2026
162603/ 007535	Procurement of Bristol Film - 98 Microns 50 GM Width 22240.00 CMD is for Unit- I & II.	06.03.2026

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website and NIC Portal only. For further details, please visit websites : www.tnpl.com / https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app

DPR/1313/Tender/2026 — TNPL - Makers of Papers loved everywhere Papers

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Engineer, Shivajinagara Division, Thimmaiah Road, Queens Road, Bengaluru - 560052.

No: EE/SJN/E-PROC/22/2025-26 Date: 24-02-2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER

(Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal only)

The Executive Engineer (Shivajinagara Division), BCCC, Bengaluru invites Tenders from eligible Contractors registered in BCCC or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the Construction of Work detailed below.

(Standard Tender Document - KW-4)

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Improvements and Construction of Roads, Drains and Footpaths at Shivajinagara Assembly Constituency (Package-04) for the year 2025-26 (Comprising of 03 Works of Govt. Annexure-1). Amount Put to Tender (without GST) (Rs. In Lakhs): 1000.00, EMD Amount (In Rs.): 10,00,000.00 (Rs. 1,00,000.00 NEFT Remaining Rs. 9,00,000.00 Bank Guarantee)

Calendar of Events: 1) Tender Documents may be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. 2) Pre Bid Meeting will be held on 27-02-2026 at 15.00 Hours in the Office of the Chief Engineer, Zone-2, BCCC, Annex-3, 4th Floor, GBA Office Compound, N.R. Square, Bengaluru. 3) Last Date for Uploading the Filled Tender Document is 04-03-2026 upto 16.00 Hours. 4) Date of Opening of Technical Bid is 05-03-2026 at 16.30 Hours. 5) Date of Opening of Financial Bid: After Technical Bid Approved. Further details can be had from the above office.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Shivajinagara Division, BCCC.

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
DEPARTMENT OF EXCISE AND TAXATION

PUBLIC NOTICE

Invitation of applications for filling up the post of Chairman, VAT Tribunal, Punjab.

1.0 Applications are invited for the above post from the interested candidates.

2.0 Qualification

Sub-Section 4 of Punjab VAT Act 2005 which contains the qualification of this post reads as under :-

"The applicant shall either be a retired judge of the High Court or a retired or serving officer of the rank of Chief Secretary to the State Government or Secretary to Government of India".

3.0 The Chairman of the Tribunal shall hold office for a term of two years from the date he assumes charge of his office and he shall not be eligible for re-appointment.

4.0 No person shall be appointed or continue as Chairman of the Tribunal, if he has attained the age of sixty seven years.

5.0 The applications (5 sets) duly completed in all respects should reach in the office of Under Secretary, Government of Punjab, Department of Excise and Taxation, 2nd Floor, Punjab Civil Secretariat, Sector-1, Chandigarh on or before 16.03.2026 (Till 5.00 PM).

The terms and conditions will be applicable as per the Punjab Value Added Tax Act, 2005 and amendments if any.

Note : Those who had responded to the earlier advertisements inviting applications shall need to apply afresh.

Ajit Balaji Joshi
Administrative Secretary Taxation
Department of Excise and Taxation

DPR/Pb. 2457/13/2026-26/8888

BROADCAST ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS INDIA LIMITED

(A Government of India Enterprise)
Corporate Office: C-56 / A-17, Sector-62, Noida (UP) 201307, Ph: 0120-4177850

EXPRESSION OF INTERESTs (EOIs) FOR CENTRALIZED EMPANELMENT OF VENDORS

BECIL invites Expression of Interest (EOI) for Centralized Empanelment of Back-End Partners / Vendors / Associates in various fields such as Security Surveillance Access Control, Audio and Video Systems, Drone, Software Development, IT Infrastructure, Cloud Services, Cyber Security, 3D Projection Mapping / Light & Sound Shows, Event Management, Data Centers, Experience Centre / Museum / Exhibition / Event Spaces with AR-VR-MR-XR, Supply of Digital / Conventional Educational and Teaching-Learning Material, Execution of Social Media Management Projects etc.

EOI Documents are available on https://www.becil.com and http://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app

Interested Applicants may kindly submit EOIs within indicated timelines.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

(SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION)

NOTIFICATION

Bengaluru, 11th February 2026

S.O. 718(E) - In the exercise of the powers conferred by clause (6) of section 20F and clause 7 A of section 2 of the Railway Act, 1989 (24 of 1989) the Ministry of Railway (South Western Railway, Construction Organization, Bengaluru Cantonment) hereby authorises the officers mentioned at column (4) in the table below as 'Competent Authority' and the officers mentioned at column (5) in the table below as 'Arbitrator' to perform the functions as such authority under the said act with effect from date of publication of this notification in the official gazette in respect of Special Railway Projects mentioned at column (2) relating to districts mentioned at column (3) in the table below for Land Acquisition required for the public purpose.

TABLE

Sl. No.	Name of the Project	District	Competent Authority	Arbitrator
1	Traffic Facilities work at Malavi: Construction of Crossing Station at Malavi (H) between HBI - KTY section.	Vijaya nagara	Assistant Commissioner - Hospet	Regional Commissioner - Kalburgi

No. W.271/CN/BNC/2025-26/Land SRP/1727

Sd/-
Pardeep Puri, Chief Engineer, Construction - III, Bengaluru Cantonment

PUB/922/VAAMC/PRD/SWR/2025-26

Download the RailOne app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through RailOne app, and enjoy up to a 3% discount.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 48 UBL 2025-26
Dated : 18.02.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following works.

Sl.	Name of the Work	Approx. Value
1	Hubballi Division : Proposed Construction of RCC side drain at Ranebennur (RNUP) Yard.	Rs. 3,01,16,933/-
2	Hubballi Division : Proposed Construction of RCC side drain at Savanur (SNU) Yard.	Rs. 2,10,23,933/-
3	Hubballi Division : Proposed Construction of SSE/JE/DCI Hubballi Building Store and Compound wall at Hubballi.	Rs. 1,01,58,000/-
4	Hubballi Division : Rebuilding of existing bridge No. 45 (Km 8214-1) in Gadag-Honagatte (GDG-HPT) Section by Box Pushing method in Assistant Divisional Engineer (Gadag Sub-Division)	Rs. 1,38,01,710/-

Last date for submission of bids: Up to 11.00 Hours on 17-03-2026

For details log on : www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Engineer/Co-ordination
PUB/922/VAAMC/PRD/SWR/2025-26 Hubballi

Download the RailOne app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through RailOne app, and enjoy up to a 3% discount.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. 11-25-31L-W-2025-26
Dated : 19-02-2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Modernization of Chikodi Road, Raybag and Gangavathi Railway stations along with associated General Electrical and Telecom works under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (Complete work).	Rs. 45,15,90,933/-

Last date for submission of bids: Upto 11:00 Hrs on 20-03-2026

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Chief Project Manager/Rail Bhawan
PUB/922/VAAMC/PRD/SWR/2025-26 Hubballi

Download the RailOne app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through RailOne app, and enjoy up to a 3% discount.

e-AUCTION NOTICE FOR LEASING OF SLR/LVPH

e-Auction Notice No. LEASE-KGP-26-03 Date : 24.02.2026

For and on behalf of the President, Union of India, the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Kharagpur Division, South Eastern Railway invites e-Auction for leasing of Rl Rl VPH for a period of 03 (three) years for transportation of parcels in the trains which are not fed in the https://www.ireps.gov.in/ website.

Category	Catalogue No.	Date of e-Auction	Auction Start Time	Auction Closing time
Parcel	LEASE-KGP-26-03	03.03.2026	11:00 hrs	12:00 hrs

Interested parties and contractors to take note of this and go through the website as mentioned above for details of the trains and related information about the e-Auction notice. For enquiries/clarifications, if any, please contact the office of the undersigned

(PR-12031) Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Kharagpur

South Eastern Railway
We serve with a smile

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED

(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC026921)

No. CEE/TAP/SE-1&2/2025-26/10531-43 & 10149-52 Date: 24.02.2026

BRIEF SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

KPTCL invites Bids on electronic mode for the following works against following enquiry numbers on Partial Turnkey basis.

S. No.	Enquiry No. & Name of the Works
1.	KPTCL/2025-26/SS/WORK_INDENT3353 Establishing 2X12.5MVA, 66/11kV sub-station in the premises of Command Hospital (AF) complex along with running of 66kV SC, 630sqmm Single Core, XLPE Copper Conductor UG Cable for a route length of 3.063kms from existing 220/66/11kV East Division GIS sub-station to proposed 66/11kV sub-station in the premises of Command Hospital (AF) complex and construction of 66kV Terminal Bay (GIS Module) at existing 220/66/11kV GIS sub-station at EOC for the proposed 66kV UG Cable line for M/s Garrison Engineer, Bengaluru for arranging Power Supply to an extent of 10,000KVA on EHT basis in favour of M/s.Garrison Engineer (I) (P) AF, Military Engineer Services, Command Hospital (AF) Complex, Agram Post, Bengaluru.
2.	KPTCL/2025-26/SS/WORK_INDENT3384 Combined Package for: Work A: Providing 2x200MVA, 220/110kV & 1x10MVA, 110/11kV Power Transformers at existing 220kV Kanabargi switching station along with construction of associated 110kV lines for a distance of 0.44kms using HPC and Lynx Conductor and laying of 110kV, 1200sq.mm XLPE Single Core UG Cable line for a route length of 0.5kms and Construction of 02 no's of 110 kV terminal bays at 110kV Nehrunagar sub-station in Belagavi Taluk and District. Work B: Construction of 220kV LILO line from existing 2nd circuit of 220kV Narendra - Belagavi (Kanabargi) DC line to the proposed 220kV CTT using HPC and Lynx Conductor for a distance of 12.148kms and laying of 220kV, 1200Sq.mm XLPE UG Cable from proposed 220kV CTT to ongoing 220/110/11kV Mache sub-station for a route length of 2.47kms and Construction of 2 no's 220kV Terminal Bays at 220kV Mache station in Belagavi Taluk and District.

The bids will be received through electronic tendering mode only. The details regarding participation in the e-tendering process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in with hyperlink "E Procurement KPTCL" or https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after 27.02.2026 at 15:00hrs. Last date & time for receipt of Bids and any extension of Due date for Bid submission will be intimated in the Karnataka Public Procurement portal. Any details required in this regard can also be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

All Corrigendum/ Addendums shall be noticed by the bidders before the last date of submission of the Bids.

Sd/- Chief Engineer, Electy., Tendering & Procurement, KPTCL, 9th Floor, Indhana Bhavana, A.R Circle, Bengaluru - 560 009.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION CHANDIGARH

E-TENDER NOTICE

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Bid Submission Schedule (Online)	Opening Technical Bid (Online)
	EXECUTIVE ENGINEER - M.C.P.H. Divn.No.3		
1.	Desilting, Rehabilitation & Strengthening of Existing 36" X 57" CBD Sewer Line with Structure Lining (CIPP Liner) at V3 Road Sector 45/46 in Chandigarh (Ch. To :- Annex/2.0). Est. Cost : Rs. 8,39,96,820/- Tender Fee : Rs. 5,000/- EMD : Rs. 16,79,976/- Time Limit : 06 Months	25-02-2026 To 09-03-2026 upto 06:55 P.M.	10-03-2026 at 10:00 A.M.

Note :- 1) Tender Notice along with detailed terms and conditions is available/uploaded on website at www.chandigarh.gov.in or etenders.chd.nic.in

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
M.C.P.H. Divn.No.3, Chandigarh.

कार्यालय नगर विकास न्यास, चिण्डीगढ़

कार्यालय (निविदा / कार्यालय) / 2025-2026 /415 दिनांक : 19-02-26

ऑन लाईन निविदा सूचना संख्या 26/2025-2026

नगर विकास न्यास चिण्डीगढ़ में उपयुक्त श्रेणी के पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित कार्यों के लिए "दो भाग पद्धति" श्रेणी में पात्रिक बोलियों में निविदा प्राप्त में तथा वर्क्स http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर ऑनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। शुल्क दर्शी की संख्या 22 (बिना U.B.N.No - UTCS2026WSOB00298 व UTCS2026WSOB00301) है।

ऑनलाईन निविदा प्रस्तावित करने की तिथि	24.02.2026 से 05.03.2026 तक	
ऑनलाईन टेंडर बंद करने की तिथि	06.03.2026 4:00 बजे तक	
ऑनलाईन निविदा खोलने की तिथि	06.03.2026 4:30 बजे	

अधिशासी अभियंता,
नगर विकास न्यास, चिण्डीगढ़

CHANDRAPUR CANCER CARE FOUNDATION

(A Government of Maharashtra and Tata Trusts initiative)

Chandrapur Cancer Care Foundation,
New Government Medical College Campus,
Ballarshah Bypass Road Chandrapur,
Maharashtra, India,442401
CIN: U85100MH2018NPL313419
Email: procurementcccf@chandrapurcancercare.org

Notice Inviting Online Tender

Reference: MT/CCCF/2025-26/P Date: 25/02/2026

1.1 Government of Maharashtra in GR No. GHC-2018/41/P N 167/Admin-1 approved 100 bedded cancer hospital. A joint initiative of the Directorate of Medical Education & Research, Department of Medical Education, Govt of Maharashtra, District Mineral Foundation and Tata Trust. Chandrapur Cancer Care Foundation is as Section 8 Company registered under Companies Act, 2013, was formed for the development of the cancer hospital.

1.2 Now for procurement of Packages listed herein below, the Director – Administration, Chandrapur Cancer Care Foundation invites interested contractors & vendors to submit online Tenders on Mahatenders (https://mahatenders.gov.in/nicgep/app).

Package No	Items	Tender Fee	Bid Security value	Period of Completion in Month (M)
P 1	Housekeeping and Cleaning Services.	₹ 25,000	₹ 37,41,824	36 M
P 2	Garden Maintenance	₹ 25,000	₹ 1,91,190	36 M

Payment of Tender Fee and/or Bid Security can be made to "Chandrapur Cancer Care Foundation" A/c: 96122011000636 Bank of India, Branch: Jatpura, Chandrapur and IFSC No: BKID0009612. All bidders are requested to enclose the receipt along with technical document as per Clause no. 4.9 e Envelop-1 Instruction to tenderer.

The Tender packages have been uploaded on Mahatenders (Government of Maharashtra e Tender portal - https://mahatenders.gov.in). Separate Tenders are hereby invited for each package and interested parties may obtain following documents from the Mahatenders Portal upon payment of non-refundable Tender Fee as specified in the table above.

1. Notice Inviting Online Tender
2. Instructions to Tenderer
3. Draft Contract Agreement
4. Schedule of Contract Agreement
5. Area Statement comparative
6. Bill of Quantities
7. Terms of Services and Standard of Service
8. Specifications
9. Make List
10. Drawings (Intent drawing is supplied by CCCF- Shop drawing will be made by contractor/Special agency)

Tender shall valid for 180 days from the date of submission and the date CCCF may deem fit.

The duly completed Tender in accordance with the Instruction to Tenderer must be submitted not later than 17:00 hours on 18-03-2026. Proposed dates of tendering process is

		Date	Time(Hrs)
1	Notice Inviting Tender	25-02-2026	11.00
2	Prospective Tenderer can download Tender Document	25-02-2026	11.00
3	Pre Bid Meeting & Site Visit	28-02-2026	13.00
4	Submission of Tender	18-03-2026	17.00
5	Opening of Technical Bid	20-03-2026	15.00

All interested parties are advised to regularly check the updates on the portal. CCCF shall not be responsible for any deficiency in the provided documents. Bidder can request clarification or submit queries via email before the Pre-bid meeting. CCCF will endeavour to address all the matters raised. CCCF invites all the participants to have a visit at Site to be acquainted with the site conditions and the requirements and purpose of the works.

Director – Administration
Chandrapur Cancer Care Foundation

All the tendering process shall be conducted through Bastar Mineral Foundation and the Office of District Collector, Chandrapur.

ODISHA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE & TECHNOLOGY, BHUBANESWAR-3

No. 2608 /CDE, Dated - 23rd February, 2026

CORRIGENDUM

Pursuant to pre-bid meeting held on 16.02.26 involving interested bidders relating to the Request For Proposal (RFP) No. 01 / UAT dtd. 03.02.2026 in selection of service provider for conducting online entrance examination, the terms and conditions, as indicated in the RFP, is revised to the extent as at Annexure I & II for reference of the interested bidders. For details please visit OUAT website (www.ouat.ac.in)

Sd/-
Registrar
OPR-1001/1033/15-26/8001

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Lokaseva Bhavan, Sachivalaya Marg, Bhubaneswar - 751001
Phone: 0674-2392133 | Website: https://dhe.odisha.gov.in | Mail: sec3hed@gmail.com

11001/31/2526

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Higher Education Department, invites sealed tenders from reputed State PSUs/ Central PSUs/Departmental Undertakings for the following work:
The complete set of bidding documents and other details are available at https://dhe.odisha.gov.in.

Estimate PAC Rs. 380 Cr | EMD Rs. 2,00,000/-

Last date for submission of bids : 23.03.2026 up to 03:00 PM
Opening of technical bids : 25.03.2026 at 11:00 AM

Sr. No.	Name of the Work	Tender No.	Tender Fee
1	Construction of college buildings and hostels	GCNE: 01/2025	Rs.10,000/-

Bids must be sent via Speed/Registered Post/Courier to: Additional Secretary to Govt. Higher Education Dept., Lokaseva Bhavan, Bhubaneswar - 751001.

Sd/- Additional Secretary to Govt., GCNE
OPR-11001/11001/15-26/8011

11001/37/2526

Government of Odisha
Higher Education Department

ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POST OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON OF ODISHA STATE HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL (OSHEC)

The Higher Education Department, Government of Odisha, invites applications for the post of Vice-Chairperson, Odisha State Higher Education Council (OSHEC).

The detailed eligibility criteria, application format and procedure for the said post are available in the official website of the Higher Education Department: dhe.odisha.gov.in. as well as in HIMS portal (http://hims.odisha.gov.in). The application must be submitted online in the HIMS portal (https://hims.odisha.gov.in/public/vchp-reg-form) within 21 days from the date of the publication of this advertisement, i.e. from 25.02.2026. The last date of submission of online application form is 17.03.2026 (23.59 hours).

Sd/-
Additional Secretary to the Government
OPR-11001/11001/15-26/8014

12001/32/2526

THE ODISHA STATE POLICE HOUSING & WELFARE CORPORATION LTD.

(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
JANAPATH, BHOINAGAR, BHUBANESWAR - 22
Ph: 0674-2541545, 2542821
E-mail: ophwc.od@nic.in Website: www.ophwc.com www.ophwc.nic.in

e-procurement notice No.- 28/OPHWC/2025-26

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Chief Engineer (OSPH&WC), Odisha, Bhubaneswar invites Percentage rate bid in Double Cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for the works as detailed below:

I	Nature of work	Building works
II	No. of Works	09 Nos.
III	Value of Tender	Rs. 3.88 Cr. to Rs. 19.73 Cr.
IV	Class of Contractor	'A' Class or 'Ex'. Class
V	Cost of Bid document (To be paid online)	Rs. 11,800.00
VI	Availability of Bid Documents in the website	Dt. 26.02.2026 to Dt. 13.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM
VII	Last date /time of Receipt of Bids in the Portal	Dt. 13.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM
VIII	Date of Opening Bid	Dt. 16.03.2026 at 10.30 A.M
IX	Date of Technical Presentation (among qualified bidders only)	Date & Time will be notified after opening of the Technical Bid

* The Bidders have to participate in OSPH&WC bidding only. Further details can also be seen from the website https://tenderodisha.gov.in. Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender shall not be published in Newspaper and can only be seen in the said website.
* The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids and terminate the tender process without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (OSPH&WC)

N.B. - The quoted rate should be all inclusive but excluding G.S.T. as applicable under extra contract.

OPR-12001/12001/15-26/8006

32001/131/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

On THE CHIEF ENGINEER AND BASIN MANAGER,
MAHANADI BASIN, AT BURLA, DISTRICT-SAMBALPUR, PIN-768017
E-mail id - cebmunidiv1@gmail.com
'e' Procurement Notice No-02 & EM-MR-44/2025-2026 (Online)
BID IDENTIFICATION NO- CE & (BM-MR-44)/2025-2026 (Online)

1	Name of the work	Remodelling of Canal System of Hirakud Dam Project (Pepanga Canal Section, Burla Irrigation Division, Burla)
2	No of works	One (01) number
3	Class of contractor	"Special Class" and "Super Class"
4	Bid Security Application No	CEBMM-MR-44/2025-2026 (Online)
5	Estimated cost	Rs.27.97 Crores
6	Period of completion	24 (Twenty-Four) Calendar Months
7	Date and time of availability of Bid Documents in the portal	Dated- 27.02.2026 at 11.30 AM to Dated-19.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM
8	Last date/time for receipt of Bids in the portal	Dated-19.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM
9	Date of opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)	Dated-20.03.2026 at 11.30 AM, Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Mahanadi Basin, Burla
10	Name and Address of the Officer inviting Bid	Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Mahanadi Basin, Burla, Dist-Sambalpur, Odisha, 768017, Email Id: cebmunidivburla@gmail.com

1. Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation/ amount of tender can also be seen in the said Website.
2. Further details can be seen from Government Website http://tenderodisha.gov.in

Sd/-
Chief Engineer & Basin Manager,
Mahanadi Basin, Burla
OPR-32001/32001/15-26/8015

Trade, defence & security on agenda as PM heads to Israel

Modi Will Address Israeli Parliament

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

PM Modi will have an informal meeting with his counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu

New Delhi: Indian govt Tuesday officially announced PM Narendra Modi's two-day visit to Israel starting Wednesday, saying it will reaffirm the deep and long-standing strategic partnership between the two countries and present an opportunity to review common challenges as well as "realign efforts towards achieving their shared vision for a robust partnership between two resilient democracies".

Modi will have an informal meeting with his counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu upon his arrival on Wednesday and shortly thereafter address the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset. He will visit a technology and innovation exhibition later in the evening before joining Netanyahu for a private dinner that the Israeli PM will host for him. Delegation-level talks between the leaders will take place on Thursday.

An upgraded security pact is among the likely major takeaways from what will be Modi's second visit to Israel. The two countries are also hoping to sign a free trade agreement later this year. "The two leaders will review the significant progress made in the India-Israel Strategic Partnership and discuss further opportunities in various areas of cooperation, including science and technology, innovation, defence and security, agriculture, water management, trade and economy, and people-to-people exchanges," said the Indian govt in a statement. The leaders are also expected to exchange perspectives on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

Modi will also call on Israeli President Isaac Herzog and visit Yad Vashem — the World Holocaust Remembrance Center — during his visit. The visit is taking place amid Israel-US tensions and the US threat of military action against Tehran. India's announcement of Modi's Israel visit came only on the evening before his scheduled departure to Tel Aviv.

Ahead of Modi's visit, Israel's ambassador to India, Reuven Azar, said significant progress is expected during the visit in areas such as security, defence and trade. "India and Israel have worked closely for years and we are proud of this strong cooperation. But the world is changing fast, and so are the threats. In order to meet them, we will deepen our defence relationship by updating our security agreements. This will allow us to engage in more sensitive projects and develop together logical solutions," Azar said.

"Our economic partnership is gaining real momentum. We signed a bilateral investment treaty and we are moving forward to signing a free trade agreement, hopefully this year," Azar added.

Congress criticises Modi for trip to Israel

On the eve of his Israel trip, the PM came under fire from Congress for going to a country that it said is engaged in dispossession and displacement of Palestinians and where citizens are fully mobilised against PM Benjamin Netanyahu for his attacks on judiciary and for corruption. It also accused Modi govt of abandoning the statehood goal for Palestine that India has supported for decades.

AICC spokesman Jairam Ramesh said PM is going to Israel despite the country having intensified attacks in West Bank and continuing to pound Gaza mercilessly, besides planning air attacks on Iran along with the US. "The Opposition in Israel is threatening to boycott Modi's address to the Israeli Parliament to protest how Netanyahu is destroying the independence of the judiciary in Israel," he said. TNN

India & Israel unequivocally condemn terror in all its forms

New Delhi: Ahead of PM Modi's visit to Israel, India and Israel unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms, including cross-border terrorism, and reaffirmed zero tolerance in a joint statement.

They strongly condemned the "brutal terror attacks in both countries, including the Oct 7, 2025, terror attack in Israel, the dastardly terror/cat attack in Pahalgam", and other acts, stressing urgent need to hold perpetrators accountable.

The statement followed a meeting of India-Israel working group on counterterrorism. Both sides exchanged views on global and regional terror threats and expressed concern over increasing use of UAVs & AI for terror purposes.

"They reviewed traditional and emerging threats such as terrorist recruitment, abuse of technology and terror financing, and discussed ways to strengthen cooperation through training, cybersecurity exchange of best practices and information sharing," it said.

The two sides renewed commitment to multilateral cooperation, and to combating terror groups and their supporters. TNN

Marriage regn soared in Bengal in '25 owing to SIR

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Kolkata: Coinciding with the special intensive revision (SIR) of the state's electoral roll, 2025 witnessed the highest number of marriage registrations in Bengal.

The year's count of 1.8 lakh registered marriages surpassed even the tally for 2022, when the numbers had soared after a Covid-induced pause in registrations.

Officials linked the need for SIR documents to the spurt in marriage registrations, adding that more marriages conducted under Islamic laws were registered in 2025. Though a marriage certificate is not among the 14 listed documents accepted for SIR, officials said these were accepted during hearings to verify reasons for changes in surnames of women voters and shifting of address.

HIGHEST IN 2025

Year	Marriages registered	SMA Sec 16
2025	1,83,733	10,969
2024	1,71,398	8,293
2023	1,68,657	9,806
2022	1,84,923	13,053

According to data compiled by the Bengal Registrar-General of Marriages, as many as 1,83,133 marriages were registered in 2025, which was 12,261 more than that in 2024.

Prior to this, the highest was 1,80,923 marriages registered in 2022.

Last year also saw a rise in the number of registrations — 10,969 — under Section 16 of the Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954, which allows couples to register their marriages after the actual ceremony.

A majority of these — 7,354 — were Muslim couples who married under Islamic laws.

'Out of love, not lust': HC quashes Pocso case, notes couple married

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Dehradun: The Uttarakhand high court quashed proceedings in a Pocso case against a 21-year-old man from Udham Singh Nagar, observing that the offence arose "out of love, not lust" and that the couple are now legally married and expecting a child. A single bench of Justice Alok Mahra passed the order on Feb 20 and directed that proceedings pending before the fast track court of the additional sessions judge of Udham Singh Nagar be dropped. It said, "Continuing prosecution or imprisonment would disrupt the family unit."

The FIR had been lodged by the girl's father on Oct 17, 2022, under IPC sections 376 (rape) and 363 (kidnapping) and provisions of Pocso Act. At the time, the accused was 19 and the girl was 17. He was arrested in Dec 2022 and secured bail in 2023 after spending several months in custody.

Counsel for the applicant submitted, "On the date of lodging of the FIR, the girl was above 17 years and was competent to understand the nature and consequences of her actions."

New name 'Keralam' reflects will of the people of the state, says Modi

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New Delhi: The Cabinet Tuesday approved a proposal to rename 'Kerala' as 'Keralam', aligning with a popular and long-standing demand of people in the state. PM Modi said Tuesday the decision "reflects the will of the people of the state". The state govt had earlier made two requests to Centre to change the name.

Announcing the decision, I&B minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that after Cabinet approval, the President will refer the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 to the Kerala legislative assembly for expressing its views under Article 3 of the Constitution. An official release said that after receiving the state assembly's views, Centre will take action and obtain the President's recommendation for introduction of the Bill in Parliament.

In 2011, the spelling of Orissa was changed to Odisha. People aware of the development said the cabinet note highlighted how, from the beginning, people of Kerala had been vociferously demanding that the state be named Keralam. However, when it was officially created on Nov 1, 1956, it was named Kerala. Since then, the demand has been raised repeatedly.

Earlier, the state assembly had passed resolutions in 2023 and 2024 requesting Centre to amend the Constitution and modify the state's name from Kerala to Keralam. The resolutions were moved by CM Pinarayi Vijayan, and only last month state BJP president Rajeev Chandrasekhar had written to the CM extending his party's support.

The Cabinet proposal included the June 2024 resolution passed by the state assembly, which mentioned the name of the state in Malayalam is Keralam and that states were reorganised on linguistic lines on Nov 1, 1956, observed as Kerala Piravi (Kerala Formation Day). "Since the time of the national independence struggle, there has been a strong demand for the formation of United Kerala for Malayalam-speaking people. But in the First Schedule to the Constitution, the name of our state is recorded as Kerala. This Assembly appeals to central govt to take urgent steps under Article 3 to modify the name as 'Keralam'," the resolution stated.

Vaishnaw dismissed speculation linking the decision to upcoming elections in the state. "Decisions are taken by the cabinet without keeping elections in view," he added.

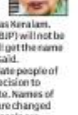
The cabinet note highlighted how the people of Kerala had been vociferously demanding that the state be named Keralam

SC allows Pinarayi govt's citizen project

Steering clear of election-eve politics, SC Tuesday allowed the Pinarayi Vijayan-led LDF govt in Kerala to continue with its "Nava Keralam Citizen Response Programme", which Kerala HC had set aside after PILs alleged that Rs 20 crore allotted to the project was meant to enable the governing alliance's cadre to visit every house for poll campaigning, reports **Dhananjay Mahapatra.**

Arguing Kerala govt's appeal, senior advocate Kapil Sibal told a bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi that these are issues the judiciary would not be able to adjudicate. How will court determine in which welfare scheme what amount should be spent, he asked. The bench agreed and stayed the HC order, issuing notice to the PIL petitioners.

Centre overlooked our proposal: Didi



The "BJP-CPM alliance" isn't "unwritten" anymore, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee said Tuesday, reacting sharply to Centre overlooking WB's name-change proposal while hastening to rename Kerala as Keralam. "One day, you (BJP) will not be in office. We will get the name changed," she said.

"I congratulate people of Kerala on the decision to rename the state. Names of several states are changed once such proposals are endorsed by state govts. However, that was not the case with West Bengal. When our students go for exams, they are called at the end since the name begins with 'W' (sic)," she said. TNN

28 elephants electrocuted in 4 yrs in Kerala

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Kochi: As many as 38 wild elephants died of electrocution in Kerala between 2022 and 2025, and 19 of them were male, according to forest department data accessed through RTI. The data also show that 68% of the elephants electrocuted (13 males and six females) were adults aged 15 years and above.

This will have adverse consequences for the genetic diversity of the elephant population in the state, an expert from the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) said. Forest officials said most of the electrocution incidents were "intentional", as local people illegally place live wires on fences around their farmland or compounds to prevent crop raiding.

₹556 crore recovered in IDFC bank fraud case: Haryana CM

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Chandigarh: Within a day of registering case in the alleged Rs 590 crore-bank fraud involving 18 departments of Haryana govt, chief minister **Nayab Singh Saini** told assembly Tuesday that govt had recovered Rs 556 crore, including Rs 22 crore in interest.

Saini, also the finance minister, said the recovered money had already been sent to the accounts of the departments concerned.

"Every paisa of public money is accounted for," he said, adding the swift recovery was made possible through coordinated efforts between state govt and senior bank officials.

According to Saini, the bank had indicated the irregularities were primarily linked to its Chandigarh branch and involved alleged collusion at middle and lower levels. Govt, in coordination with the bank, will ensure that stringent action is taken against all those responsible, he added.

The day began with a Congress protest march to Haryana assembly and a blockade of gates used by the CM, speaker and ministers.

Saini and other ministers had to take the common entrance for MLAs.

The friction led to heated debates in the House on the third day of budget session. While Congress MLAs sought to corner govt on the massive IDFC bank fraud, Saini said governance in the state had been transformed under BJP govt, and there was zero tolerance for corruption.

"The funds represent the hard-earned money of 2.8 crore citizens of Haryana and would be utilised strictly for their welfare.

"Every rupee belonging to the people will be safeguarded and spent only for their benefit," he asserted.

He said a high-level committee, headed by the finance secretary had been constituted to examine the matter and fix accountability. It also recommend action, he said.

I'm proud of 'Babbar shers' of Youth Cong, says Rahul

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Breaking his silence on the protest at the AI Summit venue that has resulted in a police crackdown on members of Indian Youth Congress, Congress' **Rahul Gandhi** Tuesday said he is proud of the "Babbar shers" of Youth Congress who protested against the "compromised PM" in national interest.

The remark came as Delhi Police arrested IYC members, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge condemned the arrests, while Rahul called them evidence of a dictatorial attitude and cowardice. "Congress strongly stands by the lion-hearted members of Youth Congress. Showing the mirror of truth to power is not a crime but a patriotic act," he posted on X.

Rahul said the IYC members were arrested for exposing truth about the deal with US. Kharge remarked, "Congress is never scared, Congress workers are not cowards. Modi is a coward."

Congress MP Randeep Surjewala said, "If opposing the govt is a crime, then every Congress worker will repeatedly commit this crime. If exposing the truth of a compromised US trade deal on every possible forum is a crime, then Congress will do it again and again."

Woman, 5 kids die as Eid clothes stock catches fire in UP

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Meerut: Six people, a woman and five children, died after a fire triggered by a suspected short circuit swept through a house in Meerut's Kidwai Nagar area Monday night.

The deceased were 28-year-old Rukhsar, her three-year-old son Aqdas, six-month-old twin daughters Sabiya and Inayat, 18-year-old Mahwish, daughter of Rukhsar's brother-in-law Farooq, and an eight-year-old son of another relative, Hammad, who was at the house.

SP (City) Ayush Vikram said the blaze originated in a ground-floor warehouse owned by businessman Iqbal Ahmed. "Prima facie, a short circuit in the clothing stock stored on the ground floor caused the fire.

"The flames spread rapidly due to the large quantity of garments kept for Eid sales," he said.

Police said the male members of the family had gone to a nearby mosque for prayers when the fire broke out, while the women were preparing dinner inside. As smoke spread through the building, Rukhsar tried to move the kids to safety, but the main exit was blocked by flames.

Police suspected a short circuit in the clothing stock stored on the ground floor caused the fire

Neighbours said cries for help continued for nearly half an hour as residents gathered outside.

Some family members, including three children, managed to escape through the terrace and climb onto a neighbouring rooftop. However, Rukhsar and five children remained inside and were overcome by thick smoke.

Mohd Tasleem, a local resident, said, "If they had reached the terrace in time, they might have survived, but they collapsed before they could escape."

Residents used ladders and water from private sources to control the fire and rescue those trapped. Fire brigade teams faced difficulty reaching the spot due to the locality's narrow and congested lanes.

Devji, among top Maoists, surrenders in Telangana

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Hyderabad: The Maoist high command crumbled in Telangana as a cluster of senior members led by Thippiri Tirupathi alias Devji publicly surrendered to police Tuesday, amid a strong security push that's suffocating the banned insurgent movement to meet Union govt's March 31 deadline to end the rebellion nationwide.

Devji, a long-time central committee (CC) member of CPI (Maoist), turned himself in along with three other senior figures, including CC member Malla Raji Reddy alias Sangram. On Feb 23, police sources had reported a breakthrough when Devji and others laid down arms in Asifabad district.

Tuesday's appearance was the official confirmation.

Police said Devji, 62, cited failing health for quitting underground life.

Devji declined questions, saying early comments could be misunderstood.

"Due to health reasons I have decided to leave underground life and join mainstream. It is not for personal convenience," he said.

"I will continue to work towards addressing people's problems within legal framework," he added, insisting he would continue political work rooted in his ideology.

THE SPEAKING TREE

PHYSICS OF TRANSITION

The real teaching of Garud Puran is not about what happens after death, but about how attentively we live before it,

write SHAMBO SAMRAT SAMAJDAR and SHASHANK JOSHI

The most profound moment of human existence is not birth, nor death — but the silent pause between the last breath and next beginning. In that fleeting interval, Indic wisdom and modern science unexpectedly meet. The *Garud Puran*, often misunderstood as a book of fear, is in fact a sophisticated exploration of transition — of how consciousness moves, reorganises, and continues.

Popular imagination reduces *Garud Puran* to vivid descriptions of heaven and hell. Yet its deeper teaching is subtler: nothing essential is destroyed at death. What leaves the body is not 'life', but an organised field of awareness — what the text calls the subtle body. This is not a ghostly duplicate of the physical form, but a carrier of tendencies, memories, and mental imprints accumulated across a lifetime.

Modern physics offers an intriguing parallel. One of its most robust principles is that information cannot be destroyed. Matter may disintegrate, energy may change form, but informational patterns persist. Even black holes, once thought to erase everything, are now understood to preserve information in transformed states. If the universe respects informational continuity, why should consciousness be any different?

Biology supports this view. The human body replaces most of its cells over time, yet identity endures. Memory is distributed across dynamic neural networks. Trauma, love, discipline, and neglect all leave biological traces — altering neural pathways, hormone responses, even gene expression. Epigenetics has shown that experience can shape biological destiny. In this light, karma is not mystical bookkeeping; it is pattern persistence.

Garud Puran describes post-death phase — often personified as Yama's realm — not as eternal punishment, but as a processing state. It is a zone of recalibration, where the moral and psychological residue of life is integrated. Pain, where described, is not sadistic; it is educative. Much like physical pain teaches the body to withdraw from harm, existential discomfort teaches consciousness to refine itself.

PERSPECTIVE

Here, neuroscience provides a striking analogy. During deep sleep, the brain consolidates memory, prunes redundant connections, and integrates emotional experiences. We are unconscious, yet profound internal work is underway. *Garud Puran*'s vision of the after-death journey functions similarly — a deep interval of reorganisation between two conscious lives. This understanding reframes ancient death rituals, too. Practices such as *shraddh* and *pindadan* are not transactions with an external afterworld. They are psychological and social technologies — helping the living process grief, release attachment, and bring symbolic closure. Modern psychology recognises that unresolved mourning can fragment the mind.

The most radical insight of *Garud Puran* emerges toward its conclusion: liberation does not come from ritual compliance or fear of consequences. It arises from Self-knowledge. When awareness recognises its own patterns — desire, aversion, fear, attachment — it loosens their grip. In scientific terms, conscious observation disrupts automatic conditioning. In spiritual terms, this is freedom.

Quantum theory adds one final resonance. At the quantum level, reality is not made of solid objects but probabilities, relationships, and transitions. Observation changes outcomes. The universe itself is participatory. *Garud Puran* anticipated this intuitively: consciousness is not a passive traveller through existence; it shapes the journey. Seen this way, death is no longer an abyss. It is a threshold, a phase shift — like water becoming vapour. The real teaching of *Garuda Puran* is not about what happens after death, but about how attentively we live before it. For between two breaths lies not darkness, but continuity and an invitation to awaken while we still can. ■

CONTRAPUNTO

If voting changed anything, they'd make it illegal

– EMMA GOLDMAN, anarchist

Deep Steal

Top-notch AI models cost billions to build, but almost nothing to steal. AI firms should be on their guard

Estimates vary, but AI firm Anthropic has spent over $8bn to train its Claude model. Obviously, it doesn't want rivals cloning Claude for free, but that's what three Chinese firms, including last year's newsmaker DeepSeek, allegedly tried doing. Anthropic says they used Claude as a teacher for their "student" models. Hardly two weeks earlier, Anthropic's bigger rival OpenAI had accused DeepSeek of extracting its model. And last year, DeepSeek's market-shaking debut was clouded by similar allegations. But how is it possible when OpenAI and Anthropic have "closed-source" models? Chinese firms can't just copy them like MP3s.

Enter "distillation", a decade-old idea that was rejected when first presented at a conference. The way it works is that a rookie AI poses millions of questions to a leading AI model like ChatGPT. It seeks not only final answers but also steps used to arrive at them. This reveals the larger model's "thinking", which the new model copies to deliver pretty good answers most of the time, using a fraction of hardware and energy.

At a time when top AI models are all American, China and other rivals have every reason to use distillation as a short-cut. For one, consider cost savings. DeepSeek last year claimed it had spent only $5.6mn to build its ChatGPT rival. Maybe it did, but around the same time Berkeley researchers "recreated" OpenAI's reasoning model in 19 hours, spending all of $450. Then, a Stanford and University of Washington team distilled its own reasoning model from Google's Gemini in 26 minutes and $50. BTW, Gemini has also been under attack from AI model distillers.

Distillation isn't always a bad thing. AI firms distil their own models for speed and efficiency regularly. As early as 2019, Google's BERT model was distilled as DistilBERT. But it's unfair when rivals use distillation to catch up. It can also be dangerous. Recall that Claude was reportedly used in America's Venezuela operation to extract Maduro. If Chinese firms figure out Claude's reasoning, but strip it of all safeguards, the resultant AI could be used to cause havoc. What can be done to prevent it? Counting on international treaties and declarations is futile. Instead, AI firms will have to improve their capabilities to detect and thwart unauthorised distillation attempts. As India's AI aspirations and capabilities grow, its models might also face such attacks. So AI defences should be built starting now.

Vote Or Not. Your Choice

SC bats for compulsory voting. But the Constitution calls voting an entitlement. That can't be compulsory

Two years ago, about 65cr Indians voted in LS polls. That turnout was more than the populations of US and Indonesia – 3rd and 4th most populous countries – combined. But it was only 66% of India's 98cr-strong electorate at the time. That means *one of every three registered voters stayed away*. Nobody disputes that bigger turnouts – approaching 100% – would make our democracy more representative, but is compulsory voting the way to reach that goal? This idea has been discussed and rejected in Parliament several times over the past 75 years. So, it's noteworthy that CJI said yesterday there's a "need to issue some kind of compulsory but not harsh mechanism to ensure that people go and vote." We, respectfully, disagree.

Voting in India has always been a right, never a duty or obligation of the citizen. You can vote, you should vote, but you don't have to vote. The Constitution calls it an "entitlement": "Every person who is a citizen of India...shall be *entitled* to be registered as a voter at any such election." Compulsory voting doesn't jell with that promise. Look at it another way. If voting is expression of a citizen's will, it must be protected by the freedom of expression, which includes the choice to remain silent. That is, not vote.

Countries like Australia have made voting compulsory. Not voting there draws a mild penalty of AU$20. But India is different. Our main problem isn't that people don't want to vote – the exception being many urban well-off voters – but that they often can't vote. A 2019 **TOI** campaign called 'Lost Votes' highlighted how 28cr migrants had been unable to cast votes in 2014 because they were working far from their home states. Instead of making voting compulsory, India needs to remove these hurdles to voting. The turnout will jump.

Tree People

Depending on where we live, we are either coniferous or deciduous, except in reverse

Jug Suraiya

As winter yields to warm spring, which will become the furnace of summer, I look at the trees that front my house.

Like almost all the trees in the plains of north India, these trees are deciduous, like the amaltas and the jacaranda.

Trees are of two types, deciduous and coniferous. Deciduous, from the Latin decidere, to fall off, are trees that shed their leaves in the cold as a survival strategy that conserves their energy in the icy embrace of winter.

Conifers, also called evergreens, like pines and firs, are generally found in cooler climes, and unlike the broad-leaded deciduous, their needle-shaped foliage is retained throughout the changing seasons.

It occurs to me that, depending on where we live, we are either like deciduous or coniferous trees, except in reverse.

People like me who live on the north Indian plains, with their extreme swings of season, are deciduous in reverse and shed their leaves, or outer garments, of sweaters, and shawls, and jackets with the onset of the hot season, and mothball them away till the Earth's revolution around the Sun brings back the cold, and with it a complete change of wardrobe.

second*opinion*

People who live in places like Chennai or Goa, where the year-long climate is pretty much the same, are like conifers and retain their sartorial leafage of kurta-pajamas, and T-shirts, and lungis no matter the calendar date.

Deciduous people convince themselves how boring it must be to have the same old, same old weather all the time, and wear the same old, same old clothes all year. What do people talk about if they can't complain about how hot or cold it is?

Coniferous people like to think what a waste of time, effort, and wardrobe space – Where the hell did I put that damn pullover? – it must be to have to keep changing your clothes all the time.

Like the grass which is always said to be greener on the other side, the branches of deciduous and coniferous are both cloaked in the green of 'mutual envy.

The Golden Puzzle

Last year, Indians spent much less on gold jewellery, much more on gold investment products. Globally too, the demand is financial, but detached from traditional fundamentals. As hard as it is to explain the momentum, it's also difficult to see what might break this

Rachir Sharma

After surging for years, the price of gold has entered the realm where storytelling drives its price. Breaking free of the fundamental forces that long explained its ups and downs, it is now rising on tales of global risk and uncertainty – which make this era feel to some observers like the gold rush of the 1970s.

Gold has long been seen as a safe haven because its price has kept pace with the rate of inflation for centuries, albeit punctuated by busts and booms. The booms tended to come in periods when real interest rates declined. As returns fell on money held in savings accounts or bonds, people tended to move their wealth into gold, which offers no yield but at least can rise in price.

That pattern started to change in a material way in 2023. Real interest rates were high compared to the recent past and rising, but gold prices began to take off. The main driver was a huge increase in purchases by central banks looking to shift their holdings away from the dollar, which US weaponised for use in sanctions against Russia over the Ukraine war. The price of gold has skyrocketed since then, but what I once called the "anti-dollar revolution led by foreign central banks" can no longer explain it.

Over the past year, the pace of central bank purchases has slowed down. Jewellery demand has plunged as consumers balk at the high prices. Instead, demand has exploded from investors in all the major markets, from India to China and US to UK. The investor share of gold purchases doubled last year to 35% worldwide, led by torrential flows into gold in all of its investable forms, from bars and coins to Exchange Traded Funds.

Indians are of course known for their special obsession with solid gold and by some measures they hold the world's largest stock: 28,000 tonnes or 14% of the total. But last year, more they fell in line with the global trend, they spent much less on gold jewellery, much more on gold investment products. World Gold Council says the "phenomenal rise" of gold ETFs in India is inspiring a raft of new product offerings, which could help keep the boom alive this year.

In short, gold is being driven largely by financial demand, and this shift is upending the traditional understanding of how to calculate its value. The models long used to explain the price of gold, which include real bond yields and inflation expectations, have all broken down.

Relative to inflation, for example, the price of gold is now five standard deviations above its historical norm; put plainly, this is freakishly unusual behaviour.

Meanwhile, a model developed by World Gold Council attributes more than 80% of gold's latest gains to "risk and uncertainty" or "residuals". That's another way of saying scary stories and "we have no idea."

The story gold bulls are telling is that the current state of the world evokes the backdrops of past gold super cycles – meaning long and strong bull markets like those of the 2000s and, especially, the 1970s. But inflation today is nowhere near the double-digit levels of the Jimmy Carter era. And it is hard to argue that uncertainties such as Trump, tariffs, and Ukraine are objectively more disconcerting than, say, oil embargoes, Vietnam, and the Iran hostage crisis were back then.

Another popular argument is that gold continues to thrive as a haven from "dollar debasement". But if that is so, why have other alternatives to the dollar such as Bitcoin been tanking, and why have other dollar assets like US stocks and bonds been holding up?

Gold also broke free of fundamentals in the later stages of its 1970s boom. By the end of that decade, gold was selling for $500 per ounce, or about 2.5 times its implied value based on real interest rates. Today the price of gold is five times this implied or "fair" value, at nearly $5,000 per ounce.

Nonetheless it is difficult to see what might break this momentum. Liquidity remains plentiful worldwide, so a lot of people are looking for more places to put money. Even after the recent buying sprees, investors hold relatively little gold in their portfolios. The 1970s super cycle ended only when the US Fed began to aggressively hike rates to fight inflation, and there is little chance of that happening now.

Gold bugs therefore say the yellow metal has plenty of room to rise, and they may be right. So far, in inflation-adjusted terms, it is up more than threefold over the last ten years. But that's not much relative to its twelvefold rise during the 1970s. And while prices may appear to have risen parabolically in recent months, the rise has been much less spectacular than the spike in the final stage of the 1970s boom, when gold doubled in price over two months.

While I have been bullish on gold for many years, I'm more agnostic now. In a market divorced from fundamentals and driven by an increasing number of random stories, it is hard to know which narrative is for real and will hold. If you want to buy more gold, you just gotta believe.

In TN, It's Not Stars Or Slogans, It's The Everyday

If parties listen to voters, they'll know what Tamils want fixed: the water crisis, unemployment, education & NEET, and income security

Ujagar Singh

As Tamil Nadu's assembly election approaches, the political script is the same old – Stalin's DMK in govt is sharpening its federal rights and social justice pitch; ADMK's trying to rebuild its organisation; BJP's looking to expand its footprint in a state it has always struggled in. Smaller parties are positioning themselves around identity, language and regional pride.

In this, Supreme Court has added an important dimension – noting govts cannot rely indefinitely on freebies and neglecting creation of sustainable employment. Not directed at any one state, but it resonated strongly in TN where welfare schemes have long been central to politics.

Poll campaign's running on usual themes: Centre-state tensions, language politics, freebies and ideology – all central to TN's political culture. But outside of political rallies, a different set of concerns dominates everyday conversations. In tea stalls in Madurai, pump workshops in Coimbatore, fishing harbours in Rameswaram, and parched fields in the Cauvery delta, people are talking water, jobs, exam pressures, rising costs and uncertain incomes.

Water is perhaps TN's most urgent issue. Per capita water availability is about 700cu.m, less than half the national average of around 1,544cu.m. Reservoir levels swing sharply between monsoons, groundwater continues to fall, and tanker lines are a routine sight in cities. Yet, water rarely dominates election speeches the way identity issues do.

Nearly 56% of TN still depends on **agriculture** and allied activities. But the sector has struggled with erratic rainfall, soil degradation and rising input costs. Productivity growth has slowed, farm incomes remain uncertain. In delta districts and dry belts alike, access to water, stable prices and reliable support systems remain a constant worry, impacting voter behaviour.

TN contributes roughly 11-12% of India's manufacturing output and is among the country's most industrialised states, but parts of its **industrial ecosystem** are under pressure. Closure of large units in recent years has affected supply chains. The Sterlite plant used to produce nearly 4L tonnes a year, about 35-40% of India's copper output. Since it shut down in 2018, India has turned into a net importer of copper. For thousands of small manufacturers of motors, pumps, grinders, and compressors in Coimbatore, higher copper prices have raised costs.

Tamil Nadu's **textile & garment** industry, which employs over 20L people across spinning, weaving and apparel units, has faced rising cotton and power costs. More than 300 textile mills have shut operations in the last five years. Export-oriented clusters like Tiruppur have seen orders fluctuate with global demand, forcing some small units to cut shifts or delay hiring. The **auto & auto-components** sector, a backbone of the state economy, is also navigating a transition as the shift towards EVs has created uncertainty for component manufacturers who depend on traditional engine parts.

Taken together, these pressures show how industrial challenges rarely stay confined to one factory or one district, but travel across supply chains, affecting small workshops, contract workers and local economies. Govt has to also address long-standing legacy issues for a sustainable balance between development and environmental protection. For many in TN's industrial belts, concern is the stability of their next pay cheque.

The **NEET** debate remains deeply emotional. TN has long argued the exam favours students from CBSE schools and those who can afford costly coaching. Recent admission patterns show a large share of medical seats going to repeat candidates and urban students. For many govt school and rural students, the exam represents a system tilted against them. Additionally, in a state where language has shaped political movements, Centre's three-language formula vs TN's two-language policy has strong emotional resonance.

Sri Lanka continues to arrest **fishermen** near Kachchatheevu island. As of late 2025, about 111 fishermen and 247 boats were reported to be in Sri Lankan custody. Each arrest disrupts incomes and creates anxiety in communities in coastal districts. Fisherfolk have urged both state and central govts to work towards a lasting solution. For them, the issue is not geopolitics but one of livelihood.

Opposition parties have pointed to the TICK or TASMAC liquor **scam** and "cash-for-jobs" scandal in the municipal administration and water supply department. At the same time, **privatisation** has triggered protests. Sanitation workers opposing outsourcing of solid waste management say it threatens job security and wages. Trade unions warn of growing informalisation while govt argues private participation helps efficiency.

With more than 5cr voters in TN, EC's exercise to create new **voter rolls** has significant implications. DMK called it "constitutional overreach", warning it could function like a backdoor NRC – a view several parties have supported.

TN politics of **identity**, language pride, and federal rights carry emotional and historical weight. But for most, practical concerns are front and centre. Will 2026 election campaigns be built around ideological narratives or offer answers to economic and social challenges? It is also a test whether parties are willing to shift the conversation from symbolism to solutions.

The writer is a former IAS officer, TN cadre and contested in 2006 assembly polls

Calvin & Hobbes

Sacred*space*

Everything is Spirit – in essence, though hidden in manifestation. If you had the perception, you would see God in everything.

Paramhansa Yogananda

Life Of Spirit Finds Expression In Inclusiveness

Avatar Meher Baba

The ways of impressionable many are as a rule emblematic of the attitude and behaviour of the influential few. In our age, these key figures in public life are, with rare exceptions, glamorous exponents of materialism. Worldly man, in his limited vision, fancies something to be right; he then proceeds to make it right for other people of similar tendencies, and to declare it sacrosanct for those whose concept of right differs from his. Such a life of arbitrary negation and uncritical imitation is not the life of the spirit; blind surrender to convention does not necessarily result in wise action; much less does it lead to perfection.

The life of the spirit has its basis in a true understanding of values and is governed by it. In the life of perfect action there must be harmonious adjustment between the material and spiritual aspects of life. This cannot be effected by granting equal importance to them. The spirit must and ever will have an inviolable priority over matter. This sovereignty is expressed not by avoiding or rejecting matter, but by making full use of it as an appropriate vehicle for the expression of the Spirit. There is no basic conflict between current of mundane life and the life of the Spirit. Spiritually evolved do not disdain objects of beauty or works of art; they do not disparage the noble achievements of science or scorn the constructive attainments of politics. Things of beauty become degraded when perverted into objects of craving, jealousy or exclusive possessiveness. Creations of art degenerate into mediums for the inflation of ego and breeding of human frailties; triumphs of science are desecrated by man into instruments for mutual destruction; domestic and international chaos is aggravated and perpetuated for selfish ends.

Rightly employed and invested with spiritual understanding, however, things of beauty can become a source of purity, inspiration and joy; works of art have the power to enable and raise consciousness of man; attainments of science reveal their capacity to redeem mankind from unnecessary handicaps and suffering. Political action, transmuted by the alchemy of the spirit into statesmanship, can be instrumental in promoting true brotherhood of humanity.

THE SPEAKING TREE

The life of the spirit is not expressed through ignoring worldly spheres of existence. It comes to full flowering when applied to the task of transmuting the material world into a channel for the divine purpose, which is to bring love, peace, happiness, beauty and spiritual perfection within the reach of all.

The life of the spirit finds its truest expression in all-inclusiveness, free from attachment, in appreciation untrammelled by entanglement. This cosmic poise comes to ultimate fruition in spiritually perfect souls. They have the divine capacity to manifest supreme excellence in any phase of life that they deem necessary for spiritual quickening of other souls. If there is a lack of happiness or beauty or goodness in lives of those who come within the Master's orbit, these very deficiencies are transmuted by Him into opportunities to shower upon them His divine love and to redeem them from spiritual poverty.

Today is the 128th birth anniversary of Avatar Meher Baba

After Israel's nod, 'lost tribe' gets ready to leave India

Bnei Menashe, settled in parts of Manipur and Mizoram, have been officially recognised by Israel, paving the way for formal citizenship, settlement and a new life in the country for its nearly 6,000 members still living in India

Prabin Kalita & H C Venkatesata | TNN

For more than two decades, W L Hangshing, a retired Indian Revenue Service officer, has carried a dream — not of career advancement or recognition, but of spiritual return. At 68, the Kuki-Zo leader from Manipur awaits the fulfilment of his long-held aspiration to "make aliyah" — the Hebrew phrase meaning "to go up", which represents a sacred journey, or migration, to Israel.

His story is emblematic of a community's collective longing. Hangshing is among the 5,800 members of the Bnei Menashe in India. Spread across Manipur and Mizoram and part of the larger Kuki-Zo group, the community identifies itself as descendants of one of Israel's 10 lost tribes.

Last Nov, the cabinet of Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu announced that it would facilitate the immigration of all remaining Bnei Menashe from India, allocating $25 million to bring them to Israel by 2030, covering flights, Hebrew instruction, housing, integration, and religious conversion, or formal initiation into Judaism.

The decision formally recognises the community and outlines a five-year programme for them to complete their aliyah. The immigrants are to be settled in the Galilee region of northern Palestine, an area that has seen significant depopulation over the last two years amid security concerns linked to Hezbollah missile threats.

Finding Home, Livelihood

The immigrants' entry and resettlement are handled by the Israeli ministry of immigration and absorption (Aliyah ve Klitah). Language comes first, said Hangshing. "Without Hebrew, you cannot find a job. The ministry then assesses skills — carpenters are placed in carpentry, the academically inclined are guided towards schools or universities — hence the emphasis on 'absorption', or full social integration," he added.

Most Bnei Menashe families settle in regions where living costs are lower, often near conflict zones like the Gaza border or Hebron. While critics argue that they are being pushed to the margins, Hangshing said it's economics that drives the choice. "They can't afford land in Tel Aviv. Even a single room there is beyond reach." Many, however, have found stability in the Neger Desert, where orchard farming suits their agrarian background and provides a steady livelihood. Miriam Winchester Zohrli, who migrated to Israel in 2020, said many migrants who once tilled paddy fields in Mizoram are now factory workers, earning a minimum of 34 shekels (about Rs 990) an hour.

File picture of a group of Bnei Menashe from Mizoram arriving in Israel. (Right) Young members of the community in Israel

First Batch This Year

Members of the Bnei Menashe community first began migrating in the 1980s, when Rabbi Eliyahu Avichayil brought small groups from India who converted to Judaism and became Israeli citizens. Previously facilitated by NGOs such as Shavei Israel, the process will now, for the first time, be handled directly by the Israeli govt and the Jewish Agency (an Israel-based international organisation that facilitates *aliyah*) in coordination with Indian authorities. Today, nearly 5,000 Bnei Menashe live in Israel across more than a dozen localities.

Hangshing, who chairs the Bnei Menashe Council of India, said around 1,200 people — the names of those in the first batch are yet to be announced — have been cleared for migration in 2026, with the rest expected to follow in phases over the next few years. Nearly 3,000 applicants were screened, with priority given to families split between India and Israel. That criterion places Hangshing himself further down the list. "My uncles are in Israel, and my father is buried there," he said. "But I don't have a first-degree relative who is currently living there."

Hangshing said his father, Ariel (Tonglkhoho) Hangshing — a former Manipur govt commissioner — migrated to Israel in 2014, when he was 80 years old, remaining there until his death in 2021. "People asked what he would do there at that age. He said he wanted to be buried in the Holy Land. Like Hindus wanting to spend their last days in Varanasi."

The Lost Tribes

The Bnei Menashe story is rooted in biblical memory. In Hebrew, the name means "children of Manasseh", one of the 10 tribes — Asher, Dan, Ephraim, Gad, Issachar, Manasseh, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon, and Zebulun — sons or grandsons of Jacob, who were lost after the Assyrian invasion of the Kingdom of Israel in the 8th century BCE. Scattered across Asia, most of these tribes assimilated and gradually lost their religious identity. The Bnei Menashe believe they preserved fragments of that past — rituals, songs, oral traditions — over nearly 2,700 years.

"There is a difference between displaced Jews and the lost tribes," Hangshing said. "The Jewish Agency was created for Jews who were scattered, not for tribes that disappeared... Many scattered to places like China, Afghanistan and Persia, where they eventually conversed or lost their identity. Today, the Jewish population of about 15 million worldwide — in Israel, America and Europe — represents only two of the original 12 tribes. The remaining 10 were lost. That is what makes the recognition of the Bnei Menashe so significant."

"Without funding from the Israeli govt, there was no formal recognition of the Bnei Menashe as one of Israel's lost tribes," he added. "We had been lobbying for years. The Jewish Agency recognised us, the rabbis recognised us, but govt policy was not there. In Nov last year, the govt finally did."

Screening And Selection

Hangshing said individuals do not apply independently for moving to Israel. "There is already a census. We have synagogues — 28 in Manipur and four in Mizoram — that maintain lists of members and families. These are submitted to the Jewish Agency, which then sends teams to screen and verify them."

"They (applicants) are not tested on theology," Hangshing said. "Judaism is something you recognise in daily life, so basic questions are asked — about prayers, festivals, and how you live the faith." Final approval, he said, takes place in Israel, where rabbis conduct a more intensive review before citizenship is granted. Applicants found lacking in religious knowledge are not rejected outright; instead, they may be placed in a yeshiva (religious school) to strengthen their understanding.

Hangshing also ruled out DNA tests. "There is no such thing as DNA matching in this context," he said. "Some groups have tried it, but they have no connection to the Jewish Agency or immigration authorities. There is no standard 'Semitic' or 'Israeli' gene. Jews have mixed over centuries — European, African, Caucasian. Everyone is mixed. There is no fixed benchmark."

Fauzia Khan on her terrace overlooking Ajmer Dargah. Her role as the keeper of the cannon — which she fires off to mark the timing of key rituals — is officially recognised by the Dargah

The woman who keeps Ramzan time with a cannon

Ashish.Mehta@timesofindia.com

In the heart of Ajmer, the constant bustle and buzz of devotees at Ajmer Sharif Dargah is periodically broken by an unusual sound. It may catch visitors by surprise, but regulars at the shrine and people in the city at large know the unmistakable boom of Fauzia Khan's cannon, which she has been firing off to mark the beginning of important occasions. With Ramzan under way, she'll be at it again, diligently fulfilling a labour of love that has earned her the moniker "Topchi".

Every year during the Urs of Khawaja Garib Nawaz, every Friday before Jumma prayers, and through Ramzan, 37-year-old Fauzia fires the ceremonial cannon from the Dargah complex. The blast announces Sehri and Iftar timings and signals prayer hours, continuing a tradition that predates modern clocks and loudspeakers. "*Ye Ibadat ka Ikaam Aur, Ziyaadatan I bhi hai aur samman bhi* (This is an act of worship, a responsibility and also an honour)," Fauzia says.

Dressed in a long kurta, her face covered with a dupatta to shield herself from smoke and sparks, Fauzia prepares the cannon with precision. The tradition dates back to the Mughal era. Emperor Akbar is believed to have introduced it to manage prayer timings during large religious events, especially the Urs and Ramzan. Fauzia learned the work early. She was eight when she began assisting her father, Mohammad Hafeez Khan. "Abba trusted me. He taught me the science, the respect, the devotion behind it," she says.

When her father died in 2008, many assumed the responsibility would pass to a male relative. Instead, Fauzia stepped forward. Dargah officials accepted her claim, and Ajmer saw its first woman artillery keeper. "There were people who said this was not a woman's job," she recalls. "But I had grown up doing it."

During Ramzan, her day begins around 2am. She cleans the cannon, prepares the gunpowder, and positions herself on the terrace. The first blast signals Sehri and is followed up by a second to mark the end of eating time. At sunset, the cannon fires again for Iftar.

The cannon Fauzia uses today weighs about 35kg and is handheld — a safer version of the older, 55kg wheeled cannon used before Independence. Fauzia's family follows a rotation system. She performs the duty for two consecutive years, followed by a year when it's handled by her cousin. She receives Rs 1,500 during Ramzan — an amount she says barely covers the cost of gunpowder. Often, she meets the expenses out of her own pocket. To earn a living, she runs a small tea-and-snack stall. "People think I probably get a lot of respect and money; I do get respect, but not money," she smiles.

She has received no formal recognition from govt or religious institutions. Her only wish, she says, is to perform Umrah (visit Mecca) and receive acknowledgement for her service.

The strongest opposition she has faced came from within her extended family. Yet, she has never stepped away — not even on the day her father died. "His body was at home," she says. "But the cannon had to be fired. Duty comes first. I knew he would want that."

She also says that she doesn't believe in roles or symbols. "Roles do not belong to men or women. They belong to those who do them with sincerity. I am not doing this for feminism. I am fighting for tradition. And tradition is stronger when it includes everyone."

KARNATAKA REAL ESTATE REGULATORY AUTHORITY
No. 1-1/5, Ground Floor, Silver Jubilee Block, Unity Building, CSI Compound, 3rd Cross, Mission Road, Bengaluru - 560027.

No: KRERA/2025-26/SE0004 Date: 24-02-2026

NOTIFICATION

Applications are invited from Agencies for **Providing Manpower Resource on Outsource basis for required number of posts in Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority and Karnataka Real Estate Appellate Tribunal, Bengaluru.** Last Date for Receipt of Applications in the prescribed format, along with supporting documents is **10-03-2026.**
The detailed notification is available on Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Secretary
Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority
DIPR/CP/5830/Advertis/2026-26

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
Office of the Chief Engineer(Kaveri-Operation & Maintenance), 8th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bangalore- 560 009.
No. BWSSB/CEK/O&M/TE/TA-01/07/2025/3100/2025-26 Date:28.02.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Call-2)
(Through KPP Portal only)

BWSSB invites tender in two stage tender system from eligible contractors for the work of **Comprehensive Operation & Maintenance (O&M) of CWSS Stage-IV, Phase-II, 550 MLD Water Treatment Plant (WTP) at T.K. Halli for 5 years**
Amount put to tender : **Rs. 2951.85 Lakhs.**
EMD: **Rs. 30.00 Lakhs.**
The last date and time for receipt of completed tenders is on **26.03.2026 upto 15:00 Hrs.** The bids will be opened on **27.03.2026 at 16.00 Hrs.** The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact undersigned office during the working hours.
Sd/- Chief Engineer
DIPR/CP/JA/5847/2025-26 (Kaveri-Operation & Maintenance)

सचिव, सेना अग्रणी बैंक सोनापुर
Sena Pramuk Mandir Pvt. Kolkata
(Formerly KOLKATA PORT TRUST)

CORRIGENDUM - IV
Some changes in [Tender No.:- SCMP/MS/17/2026/2025-2026] E-Tender No. 2026_KoPT_893751_1 for "Integrated development & Mechanization of Berth No. 9 and 10 jetsWhile Berth No. 8 and 9) on DBFOT basis at Haldia Dock Complex, SMPA" for 30 years have been incorporated in "Corrigendum-IV Notice". The Bidding Document and "Corrigendum-IV Notice" are available in https://eprocure.gov.in/cpppcommonprocurement/ and https://smp.smportkolkata.in

Karnataka Public Works Department
Office of the Engineer-in-Chief, PRAMC, PWD, Bengaluru-560001
No.: EIC/PWD/05/PRAMC/2025-26/1810 Date: 24.02.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER

The Executive Engineer, PRAMC, KPWD on behalf of Governor of Karnataka, invites Short-Term Tender for 11 Road works in Chikamagaluru District and 2 road works in Shimoga District. Further details can be obtained from KPP Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from **25.02.2026, 05:30 PM** onwards.

Sd/-, Executive Engineer,
PRAMC, KPWD, Bengaluru
DIPR/CP/LC/5856/2025-26

TUMAKURU MACHINE TOOL PARK
(Joint Venture of GOI & GOK)
(CIN-U46207KA2017MPL099566)
No. 2, 2/1 & 2/3, KIADB Building, 6th Floor, Acharya Tulasi Marga, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru-09.
Mob: 8050660241 e-Mail: tmtp@kiadb.in, Website: www.tmtp.in
No: TMTP/F&A/0278-section 03/41/2025-26 Date:25.02.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tumakuru Machine Tool Park (TMTP), (SPV), intends to invest its surplus funds of **Rs. 15.60 Crore** in the Fixed Deposit for a period of **181 days** with Nationalized / Public Sector Banks. Last date and time for submitting the tender is: **05.03.2026 at 16.00 hours.** For more details visit **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Chief Executive Officer, TMTP

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. : 73-Elect/G/TRY/025-26 Date : 21.02.2026
E-Tender Notice
Senior Divl. Electrical Engineer/Gen/N.C. Rly/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite the following e-Tenders on prescribed form for the following works up to 15:00 Hrs. on 16.03.2026 The details of the tenders are as under:-

TN : ELG-148-2026	Cost of work (in Rs.) : 21909492.67	
Name of work : Re-wiring of staff quarters under section of SSE(P)S/NCR, SBG/Ki, ETW, FTP, DER&MKP.		
Bid Security (in Rs.) : 297600.00	Duration of completion : 06 Month	
TN : ELG-156-2026	Cost of work (in Rs.) : 15677791.86	
Name of work : Provision of VRF air conditioning system in the newly constructed building of Railway Central Hospital Prayagraj.		
Bid Security (in Rs.) : 225600.00	Duration of completion : 06 Month	
Tender Opening Date : 16.03.2026		

Note : 1. The complete information along with tender document of above e-Tender is available on Website www.ireps.gov.in up to 15:00 hrs. on the due date of tender opening. 41936 (C)
North central railway @ www.centralrailway.gov.in @CRCNCR

Numaligarh Refinery Limited
(A Group Company of Oil India Limited)
NRL
RAIL PETROLEUM CORE (RPC)

Product	Qty	Auction date	Time
RPC	18,000 MT	10.03.2026	11:00 AM to 01:00 PM for Assam (1st Auction)
	Left over quantity of 1st auction	20.03.2026	11:00 AM to 01:00 PM) for all (2nd Auction).

NB: The second auction on 20.03.2026 at 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM is subject to any left over quantity after the first auction.
Minimum upliftment by each bidder: 500 MT.
For more details bidders are requested to go through the Business Rule Document (BRD) available in the website.

Contact Details
Phone No.: 9674758712, E-mail id: petrol@numaligarhrefinery.com
Customers are requested to visit www.nrl.co.in & www.tenderwizard.com/ESALE for regular auction of Paraffin wax, Sulphur/RPC & OPC.
Any additional or corrigendum of this notice shall be published on the above mentioned website only.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY
KANKE, RANCHI-834006, JHARKHAND
A.12028/06/2024/Part-II-Estt/5102 Dated: 24/02/2026
WALK-IN-INTERVIEW
Central Institute of Psychiatry, Kanke, Ranchi - 834006, Jharkhand invites application for the post of Yoga Instructor to be fill up on contract basis for a period of 1 year only.

Sl.No.	Name of post	Consolidated pay per month	No. of Post
1.	Yoga Instructor	22,500/-	1

The interview scheduled to be held at Central Institute of Psychiatry, Kanke, Ranchi - 834006, Jharkhand, on 17.03.2026 at 11.00 A.M. Further details may be seen on CIP website i.e. www.cipranchi.nic.in.
Sd/-Director

Government of Karnataka
General Hospital Channarayapatna
ph: 08176-252232 Email: amoghcpatna@gmail.com
No:GH/CIP/OG/Tender/01/2025-26, Date:23.02.2026.
TENDER NOTIFICATION
Tender Were Invited Tender through e-procurement KPP Portal to provide a total Number of 19 Group D and 12 Non Clinical Out Source Man Power Services to 100 Bedded Taluk General Hospital Channarayapatna Hassan Dist . Tender Registrations can be submitted by Online KPP Portal From 23.02.2026, Deadline For receipt of tender registrations Last Date is 24.03.2026 Time Before Evening 05 Of PM. More details of tender documents terms and conditions will be available in Karnataka Public Procurement Portal. Tender Amount: Rs.64,75,204=00 (Sixty Eight Lakh Seventy Five Thousand Two hundred Four Rupees Only) EMD Amount: Rs.1,37,504=00 (One Lakh Thirtty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Four Rupees Only) For any Inquiry Contact In Office working days Morning 10AM to Evening 4:30 PM.
sd/- Surgeon, General Hospital
Channarayapatna, Hassan Dist-573116.

सचिवालय, मुजफ्फरपुर
(महानिदेश एवं पदेन विभाग)
- अल्पावधिक आम नीलामी सूचना -

पटना जंक्शन के बहुमंजिला पार्किंग स्थल के लिए निम्नलिखित वाहनों एवं वाहन अवशिष्ट, [illegible] के अधीन निम्न वाहनों एवं वाहन अवशिष्ट [illegible] मुजफ्फरपुर के कार्यालय परिसर, मुजफ्फरपुर के समक्ष [illegible] नीलामी की तिथि [illegible] नीलामी की तिथि [illegible]

क्रम सं०	विवरण	वाहनों की सूची क्रमांक	नीलामी का स्थान	आवेदन जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि	नीलामी की तिथि
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2	[illegible]	[illegible]	जिला परिषद परिसर, मुजफ्फरपुर	[illegible]	[illegible]
3	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

[illegible]

क्रम सं०	वाहन निर्माता कंपनी	वाहन का प्रकार	अधिकृत वाहन संख्या/बेस्ट कार/चेसिस संख्या	वाहन का न्यूनतम निर्धारित मूल्य	मुनाफा कमा राशि (50%)	वाहन स्थल पर्यवेक्षित वाहन का विवरण	वाहन स्थली का नाम एवं पता	अनुमति
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[illegible] www.muzaffarpur.bih.nic.in [illegible] www.state.bih.gov.in/publicsector [illegible]

Pb. No. 24751 (Online) 25-26
सहायक आयुक्त मालविभाग, मुजफ्फरपुर
विज्ञापन में शामिल का स्थापन, बिक्री एवं नवीन अवेदन हेतु इसके संबंधित विज्ञापनदाता इस नंबर पर एवं समय, आपकी जानकारी एवं सही करेंगे।
टोल फ्री नं०- 15545 or 1800 345 6268

RIS
Research and Information System for Developing Countries
विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली

CMEC
Centre for Maritime Economy and Connectivity
समुद्री अर्थव्यवस्था व संपर्कता केंद्र

INDICATIVE ADVERTISEMENT FOR RECRUITMENT AT RIS

The Centre for Maritime Economy and Connectivity (CMEC) at RIS conducts research on issues related to engagements with other maritime nations/regions/ alliances, as well as India's growth in the maritime sectors, as elaborated in the Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision (MAKV)-2047 and Maritime India Vision (MIV)-2030. Details in respect of CMEC may be seen at www.ris.org.in/cmec

RIS Invites applications from well-experienced and qualified candidates for the posts of Consultant & Research Assistant on contractual basis

Details are available on the RIS website : www.ris.org.in

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice No.: Project-SWR-2025-SSC-JU Dated 19.02.2026
The Undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Item of work	Approx. Value
Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of Traction Overhead equipment (OHE) for Upgradation work of Electric Traction System from 1x25 kV to 2x25 kV traction system for Bengaluru (SBC) - Jolarpet (JTJ) section of Bengaluru Division of South Western Railway to meet 3000 MT loading target.	Rs. 1,46,15,86,375/-

Last date for submission of bids: Upto 18:00 Hrs. on 11.03.2026
For details log onto www.ireps.gov.in
Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer/Project Bengaluru
PUB/SWR/PROPS/2025-26
Download the RailOne app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through RailOne app, and enjoy up to a 3% discount.

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026

TOM HANKS IS SET TO PORTRAY ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN THE UPCOMING ADAPTATION OF BOOK 'LINCOLN IN THE BARDO'

VOTE FOR THE MAN WHO PROMISES LEAST; HE'LL BE THE LEAST DISAPPOINTING
— BERNARD BARUCH

RUSSELL BRAND PLEADS NOT GUILTY IN LONDON COURT TO ADDITIONAL CHARGES OF RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT IN 2009

Anthropic accuses 3 Chinese firms of harvesting its data

'Nat'l Security Risk, May Help Beijing Make Bioweapons For Surveillance'

San Francisco: The San Francisco artificial intelligence startup Anthropic has accused three Chinese companies of improperly harvesting large amounts of data from its AI technologies in an effort to accelerate the development of their own systems.

Anthropic said in a blog post Monday that DeepSeek, Moonshot and MiniMax — three prominent Chinese startups — used about 24,000 fraudulent accounts to generate more than 16 million conversations with its Claude chatbot that could be used to teach skills to their own chatbots.

Using data from one AI system to train another — a process called distillation — is common in AI work. But Anthropic's terms of service forbid anyone to surreptitiously harvest data for distillation and do not allow its technologies to be used in China. OpenAI, Anthropic's primary rival, has also accused Chinese companies of lifting large amounts of data from its chatbot, ChatGPT, for similar purposes.

In a memo sent to the House Select Committee on China last week, OpenAI said that DeepSeek and other Chinese startups were using new and "obfuscated" distillation methods as part of their "ongoing efforts to free-ride" on technologies developed by OpenAI and other US companies.

Like OpenAI, Anthropic said the practice was a national security risk, adding that it could allow China to build AI technologies to create bioweapons or tools for mass surveillance. The startup has gunfire also its technologies designed to prevent them from being used in those ways, but the guardrails can be stripped away during distillation.

Anthropic is facing multiple lawsuits accusing it of illegally using copyrighted internet data to train its systems. In Sept, Anthropic agreed to pay $1.5 billion to a group of authors and publishers after a judge ruled it had illegally downloaded and stored millions of copyrighted books. OpenAI and other AI companies face similar suits, including a lawsuit brought by New York Times against OpenAI and Microsoft.

Reacting to the development, xAI CEO, Elon Musk slammed Anthropic saying, "Anthropic is guilty of stealing training data and has had to pay multi-billion-dollar settlements for their theft." AGENCIES

Anthropic's terms forbid anyone to harvest data for distillation. Separately, over not sharing its technology with Pentagon, the company's CEO Dario Amodei (inset) has made clear his ethical concerns about unchecked govt use of AI

Hegseth and Anthropic CEO to meet as debate intensifies over military's use of AI

US secretary of defence Pete Hegseth was likely to meet Tuesday with the CEO of Anthropic, with the artificial intelligence company the only one of its peers to not supply its technology to a new US military internal network. Anthropic, maker of the chatbot Claude, declined to comment on the meeting but CEO Dario Amodei has made clear his ethical concerns about unchecked govt use of AI, including the dangers of fully autonomous armed drones and of AI-assisted mass surveillance that could track dissent. It underscores the debate over AI's role in national security and concerns about how the technology could be used in high-stakes situations involving govt surveillance. The Pentagon announced last summer that it was awarding defence contracts to four AI companies — Anthropic, Google, OpenAI and xAI. Each contract is worth up to $200 million. AP

'China's DeepSeek trained AI model on Nvidia's best chip despite US curbs'

Washington: Chinese AI startup DeepSeek's latest AI model, set to be released next week, was trained on Nvidia's most advanced AI chip, the Blackwell, a senior US official said on Monday, in what could represent a violation of US export restrictions. The US believes DeepSeek will remove the technical indicators that might reveal its use of American AI chips, the official said.

The Chinese embassy in Washington said Beijing opposes "drawing ideological lines, overstretching the concept of national security, expansive use of export controls and politicising tech issues." White House AI Czar David Sacks and Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang argue that shipping advanced AI chips to China cheered rapes competitors from redoubling efforts to catch up with Nvidia's technology. REUTERS

BoJo says send non-combat European troops to Ukraine now

UK ex-PM also questioned Europe's continuing purchase of Russian energy, 'US is doing something to stop countries like India from buying Russian oil, but why is Europe still buying Russian energy?'

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Kyiv: Former UK PM Boris Johnson called for boots on the ground in Ukraine, even as he slammed Europe for not showing enough urgency to put pressure on Russia to end the war. "Europe is only applying a tenth of the pressure that it can on Russia. Things need to go up a gear to stop the war."

Speaking in Kyiv on the fourth anniversary of the full-scale Russia-Ukraine war, Johnson said that Europe should send non-combat troops to Ukraine now instead of waiting for a ceasefire. "Why can't these European non-combat troops help in reopening Lviv airport? This will show Putin that Europe will stay committed to Ukraine's security and future."

Johnson added that Putin currently doesn't feel that Europe is determined, and therefore, doesn't feel the need to deal. "Putin is fundamentally weak. If Ukraine gives up the Donbas, Russia will go for a ceasefire? Putin will just pocket the Donbas and continue his aggression." However, Johnson was quick to quash any talk of Europe going it alone and turning its back on the alliance with US. "US provides 70% of Nato's military capabilities, 100% of the group's heavy-lift capabilities. Europe alone can't bring Putin to the negotiating table. All this talk of breaking the Trans-Atlantic alliance is unrealistic and only music to Putin's ears."

He also questioned Europe's continuing purchase of Russian energy. "We are still importing around 12% of our energy from Russia. That's nearly $18bn to Putin every month. US is doing something to stop countries like India from buying Russian oil, but why is Europe still buying Russian energy? Ukraine will win eventually. But that victory will come at a much higher price if Europe doesn't step up."

Top Gen said to dispute Trump's expectation of easy win in Iran

Eric Schmitt

Washington: President Donald Trump said on Monday that General Dan Caine, the chair of the joint chiefs of staff, believed that any eventual military action ordered against Iran would be "something easily won." But that is not what Caine has told Trump and other senior advisers in recent high-level White House meetings on Iran, people briefed on internal administration deliberations said.

Instead, Caine has said that the US has amassed forces in the West Asia to carry out a small or medium strike, but that there would be a potentially high risk of American casualties and that such an operation would have a negative effect on US weapon stockpiles.

Caine has also underscored that the operations under consideration in Iran would be more difficult than the successful capture last month of President Nicolas Madure of Venezuela.

The apparent disconnect underscores the balancing act that Caine, the president's top military adviser, is carrying out: presenting the commander in chief with an array of military options, along with their potential risks and consequences, without offering his opinion about his own choice. A spokesperson for the military's joint staff declined to comment.

Trump's comment, in a social media post, appeared to be prompted by reports in New York Times and other news publications about military options he is weighing if Iran does not give up its nuclear programme.

"General Caine, like all of us, would like not to see war but, if a decision is made on going against Iran at a military level, it is his opinion that it will be something easily won," Trump said in his post. "He knows Iran well in that he was in charge of Midnight Hammer," Trump said.

"Caine has not spoken of not doing Iran, or even the fake limited strikes that I have been reading about, he only knows one thing, how to WIN and, if he is told to do so, he will be leading the pack." In fact, during the recent meetings, General Caine discussed what the military could do from an operational standpoint but declined, as he regularly does, to advocate a certain policy position. NYT

Caine has said that the US has amassed forces in West Asia to carry out a small or medium strike, but that there would be a potentially high risk of American casualties and that such an operation would have a negative effect on US weapon stockpiles

Iran nears deal to buy supersonic anti-ship missiles from China

London: Iran is close to a deal with China to purchase anti-ship cruise missiles, according to six people with knowledge of the negotiations, just as the US deploys a vast naval force near the Iranian coast ahead of possible strikes on the Islamic Republic. The deal for the Chinese-made CM-302 missiles is near completion, though no delivery date has been agreed, the people said.

The supersonic missiles have a range of about 290 kilometres and are designed to evade shipborne defences by flying low and fast. Their deployment would significantly enhance Iran's strike capabilities, two weapons experts said. Negotiations with China to buy the missile weapons systems, which began at least two years ago, accelerated sharply after the 12-day war between Israel and Iran in June, according to the six people with knowledge of the talks.

"It's a complete game-changer if Iran has supersonic capability to attack ships in the area," said Danny Citrinowicz, a former Israeli intelligence officer and now senior Iran researcher at Israel-based Institute for National Security Studies think tank. "These missiles are very difficult to intercept." REUTERS

Russian agency claims UK, France covertly planning to transfer N-weapons to Ukraine

Moscow: A Russian intelligence agency on Tuesday claimed that the UK and France are covertly planning to transfer nuclear weapons to Ukraine. The Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) made this claim in a report it issued on Tuesday as Moscow's military operation in the former Soviet republic of Ukraine entered its fifth year.

Without providing any evidence to support its claims, the agency said: "The British and French realise that their designs imply a gross violation of the international law, first of all the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and carry the risk of destroying the global non-proliferation system."

"The Westerners' main efforts are focused on making Kyiv's possession of a nuclear weapon look like it was developed by Ukrainians themselves," the report added.

Reacting to the report, the Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov underlined that nonnuclear Ukraine is one of the conditions of the settlement of the crisis as Moscow strives for a negotiated end to fighting. "Undoubtedly, this information about Paris and London's intention to arm Kyiv with a nuclear bomb is extremely important... We will certainly take this information into account during the ongoing negotiations...," he said. The next round of peace talks with US mediation is expected in Geneva on Feb 27, according to local reports.

The SVR did not include documentary evidence to back up its assertion, which the French embassy in Moscow told the RIA2 news outlet was "absolutely false." There was no immediate comment from Britain. Ukraine too dismissed the report as "absurd". "Russian officials, known for their impressive record of lies, are once again trying to fabricate the old "dirty bomb" nonsense," Heorhii Tykhyi, spokesperson for the Ukrainian foreign ministry, said.

"For the record: Ukraine has already denied such absurd Russian claims many times before, and we officially deny them again now. We urge the international community to reject and condemn Russia's dirty information bombs." AGENCIES

UK House approves release of classified docus tied to Andrew

London: Britain's House of Commons on Tuesday approved the release of papers related to former Prince Andrew's appointment as a trade envoy, a position he held for about a decade during which he is suspected of improperly passing govt information to disgraced US financier Jeffrey Epstein.

The approval came in a voice vote. It was unclear when the release could occur, as the former prince was arrested late at week on suspicion of misconduct in public office. The govt has made clear it does not want to interfere in the inquiry. Ed Davey, the leader of the opposition Liberal Democrats and the MP who introduced the motion, argued that it was time for transparency.

Mandelson out on bail

London police released former ambassador Peter Mandelson on bail in the early hours of Tuesday, in a probe into his ties to Epstein. Mandelson was arrested on suspicion of misconduct in public office on Monday. Mandelson is being probed over allegations that he sent sensitive documents to the late US sex offender when he was a minister, including during the 2008 financial crash. Police have not specified which documents are part of the probe. AGENCIES

Indo-Canadian translator on Int'l Booker longlist

London: Padma Viswanathan, a Canadian writer of Indian heritage, was on Tuesday named on the 2026 International Booker Prize longlist as the English translator of a "haunting" Portuguese language novel by Brazilian author Ana Paula Maia.

'On Earth As It Is Beneath,' described by judges as a stark exploration of power and corruption, is among 13 worldwide contenders for the literary honour. The annual prize worth £50,000, divided equally between the author and translator, was last year won by Kannada writer-activist Banu Mushtaq and translator Deepa Bhasthi for 'Heart Lamp'. PTI

Canada summons OpenAI officials on use of chatbot by shooter who killed 8

Canadian officials have summoned officials from OpenAI Tuesday for a meeting following revelations that the company did not inform authorities about a user whose account had been suspended months before she committed a mass murder in British Columbia on Feb 10. The country's minister of artificial intelligence, Evan Solomon, has sought explanations about safety protocols and thresholds for when information is passed on to the police.

Solomon said he was "deeply disturbed" by what he had learned of the company's actions involving Jesse Van Rootselaar, the 18-year-old who authorities say killed eight people in the rural community of Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia before killing herself.

Van Rootselaar displayed a fascination with weapons and extreme violence, according to a review of her social media accounts by NYT, and documented her experiences with mental health issues. Messages sent by Van Rootselaar to her ChatGPT chatbot raised flags internally at OpenAI last June, according to the company.

After the company's abuse detection system, which uses automated tools and investigations by staff members, picked up on concerning messages from her account, Van Rootselaar was banned from the platform, the company said. Van Rootselaar's use of ChatGPT before the shooting was first reported by Wall Street Journal.

OpenAI said it had considered informing law enforcement about the shooter's account but ultimately decided not to do so because the company determined that there was no credible planning on the part of the user. OpenAI says it tries to balance public safety against protecting the privacy of users.

It says it also wants to avoid being overly aggressive about issuing warnings that could lead law enforcement officials showing up unannounced at a user's home. But the company's decision not to reach out to authorities raised concerns among some employees. OpenAI said it did contact the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with information about Rootselaar's account activity after the company learned of the mass shooting. The police is seeking an order to force relevant digital platforms and AI firms to preserve potential evidence in the case. NYT

People attend a vigil for school shooting victims in Tumbler Ridge

US moves closer to tougher H-1B wage norms as proposal clears federal review

Lubna Kabby | TOI

The US has moved a step closer to revising wage rules for foreign workers after a proposed regulation affecting the H-1B visa and employment-based green card process cleared federal review — a development that could eventually push up minimum wage requirements for sponsored workers.

The proposal was submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review two months ago, and the rule is likely to be published shortly for public comment before finalization.

Prevailing wages determine the minimum salary US employers must pay foreign employees based on occupation and location. Any change to this framework directly affects hiring costs, eligibility thresholds and sponsorship decisions. While the detailed regulatory text has not yet been released publicly, immigration experts expect the proposal to modify how wage levels are calculated and potentially increase required salary benchmarks across multiple occupations.

During Donald Trump's earlier tenure as president, the department of labour introduced a rule in Oct 2020 that significantly hiked wages for H-1B workers and employment-based green card applicants by 40% to 100%.

FUTURE TENSE

The final rule was successfully challenged in court, and was later withdrawn. While the Biden administration had sought to issue a fresh set of wage rules, the plan was eventually put on the backburner.

The move is significant for Indian professionals, who account for the overwhelming majority of H-1B visa holders and form a large share of employment-based green card applicants in the US, particularly in the technology and healthcare sectors.

According to a report issued by the USCIS of the total H-1B applications (including extensions) approved in fiscal 2024, 71%, or about 2.8 lakh, were for Indian beneficiaries.

While the public comment window for any proposed rule is open for 30 to 60 days, immigration experts believe the comment period may be restricted to 30 days to expedite finalisation of the wage rule. The revised framework could apply to H-1B beneficiaries selected in the 2027 season. Registrations for the H-1B cap visa are scheduled to open next month. TOI has reported earlier that sponsoring employers are not gauging about the H-1B cap season, and the wage rules could be the final dent in the coffin.

DAILY PLANET

NYPD HIT WITH SNOWBALLS, LAUNCH PROBE: New York City police are investigating after officers were pelted with snowballs while responding to a massive snowball fight at Washington Square Park in Manhattan (above), as a winter storm blanketed the northeast in snow. A video of the fracas shows two uniformed officers pacing a walkway in the park Monday as snowballs fly at them from all directions, hitting the officers and covering them in snow. The officers showed at least two people to the ground as snowballs continued to whizz by. At one point, a person runs up behind an officer and smashes some snow onto his head. One of the officers can be seen rubbing his eye toward the end of the video.

Most Americans say Trump is growing erratic with age: Poll

Six in ten Americans including a significant slice of Republicans think President Donald Trump has become erratic as he ages, according to a new Reuters/Ipsos poll. The six-day poll concluded on Monday, the day before the 79-year-old president was likely to deliver his annual State of the Union address to Congress following a month of angry reprimands of lawmakers and judges. Trump's overall popularity has been little changed in recent months. Some 40% of respondents in the latest poll approved of Trump's performance as president, up two percentage points from earlier this month. The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

US envoy won't 'interfere' in France affairs after row over activist's death: Paris

The US ambassador to France, Charles Kushner, called Franco's foreign minister on Tuesday and said he did not want to interfere in the public debate, a day after snubbing a summons at the foreign ministry, a source close to the minister said. Kushner was banned by Jean-Noel Barrot on Monday evening over comments made by the embassy on the killing of a French far-right activist last week. Quentin Deranque was beaten to death in a fight with alleged hard-left activists earlier this month. The fallout from the incident has stoked anger across the political spectrum. The US embassy in France and the US state department's Bureau of Counterterrorism said they were monitoring the case, warning on X that "violent radical leftism was on the rise" and should be treated as a public safety threat.

The unconscious soundtrack of the doomscroll generation? It's phonk

Andrea Prada Bianchi

In the last month, the music artist with the largest audience across YouTube platforms wasn't Bad Bunny or Taylor Swift. It was Skrughter, a phonk producer. The term probably doesn't sound familiar, but anyone who's spent any time on social media has almost certainly listened to it.

Maybe it's better to say "heard it," since the overwhelming majority of people who consume phonk don't recognise it as a genre, let alone actively choose it. But it's constantly playing in the background during YouTube Shorts, TikTok or Instagram Reels. It can sound like electronic dance music, but also hip-hop, trap, funk or a mix of those. It can accompany dance clips, gaming montages, fan edits, workout content, sports highlights, motivational clips and anything aiming to convey high-energy vibes.

Quietly making its way as the most popular music on vertical videos, phonk has become the unconscious soundtrack of a generation that spends hours doomscrolling online. And it has earned a fortune for its producers, often teenagers who can create a viral track from their bedrooms and become millionaires through royalties within a matter of months.

"I've been waiting for this conversation for the past, like, five years," Kevin Meenan, 43, music trends manager at YouTube, said as an opening statement in a call. The reason someone like Skrughter has such a huge following on YouTube, Meenan explained, is that the monthly audience is calculated by combining "classic" YouTube views with the listenership on all YouTube platforms, including Shorts. This month, Skrughter's music reached 98.1 million unique users, more than twice Taylor Swift's (39.4 million) and more than six times Bad Bunny's (13.9 million).

"Phonk is a sleeping giant," Josh Mateer, 34, head of A&R at SoundOn, TikTok's distribution platform for artists and labels, said in a phone interview. "There is a huge juxtaposition between the volume of internet traffic around phonk and the sort of culture as an underground musical movement."

The roots of the genre date back to the Memphis, Tennessee, rap scene of the late '80s and '90s, when producers like Tommy Wright III and Three 6 Mafia began defining a raw, sinister sound marked by heavy bass, eerie lyrics, cowbells and hypnotic loops.

By the end of the 2000s, Russian and Eastern European producers entered the scene. Tyler Blatchley, 41, co-founder of the phonk label Black 17 Media, was working at Sony at the time. In Dec 2010, he heard an obscure track by Russian producer Kaito Shoma on TikTok and recognised some Three 6 Mafia lyrics. He contacted the group's DJ Paul and cleared the song for monetisation. It was the beginning of what is called drift phonk (from its use in clips of drifting cars) and the genre's explosion on social platforms.

Today, Blatchley lives in a villa with a pool and basketball court one hour's drive from Miami. "We don't even know how to pronounce half of them," he said. "These kids are producers that work out of their bedrooms from all over the world, and they're watching the algorithm to see what's popular on vertical video, and then they're adjusting the kind of music that they make accordingly."

The latest iteration of phonk is so-called Brazilian phonk. Initially dubbed Automotive phonk, it got confused with Brazilian "funk," an older genre with authentic Brazilian roots. It is this branch of phonk — more aggressive than drift, but in some cases more danceable — that pushed Skrughter to the top of the charts. NYT

SYNCED TO THE SCROLL

TIMES BUSINESS
THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026

Amid mounting losses, Starbucks stays bullish

Starbucks is doubling down on India despite fierce local competition and a slowdown in consumption demand. It operates over 500 stores in the country

- Losses at Tata Starbucks nearly doubled in the year to March '25, reaching $16.5 million, even as revenue rose 4.8%, according to data platform Tofler
- The Seattle-based chain is also streamlining operations in the US while grappling with consumer boycotts in the Middle East

Capillary to buy Mastercard's Session M for $20 mn

Bengaluru: Loyalty management platform Capillary Technologies India on Tuesday said it will acquire Mastercard-owned Session M in an all-cash deal valued at $20 million. The Bengaluru-based company, which went public last year, will invest in Session M and its related entity, Session M Czech Republic, through Capillary, according to a stock exchange disclosure. Founded in 2011 and acquired by NYSE-listed Mastercard in 2019, US-based Session M operates in the loyalty software-as-a-service (SaaS) space. TNN

Wall St sell-off, AI-scare for IT stocks sink sensex 1,069 pts

TechM, HCLTech Top Losers | US-Iran Tensions Deepen Fear

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: A global sell-off in a large number of technology stocks affected investor sentiment on Dalal Street on Tuesday, resulting in sensex sliding by 1,069 points or 1.3% to close at 83,236 points. The current sell-off is on the back of fears that AI models could upend established business models of a large number of IT giants including Indian majors like TCS, Infosys, Wipro and others. Global players like IBM and Accenture too are on the same boat.

The sell-off in IT stocks led to a 4.5% crash in BSE's IT index with the biggest contributors being Infosys (down 3.9%), TCS (down 3.8%), HCL Tech (down 6.1%) and Tech Mahindra (down 6.6%). The day's session started on a weak note after the US markets closed sharply lower on Monday night. Sensex opened a little over 200 points down, slid through the session and closed a tad off the day's low of 81,935 points. On NSE too, Nifty showed a similar trend and closed 288 points (1.1%) lower at 25,425 points.

According to Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit Investments, Tuesday's fall was led by significant weakness in IT stocks amid renewed global concerns over AI-driven disruptions and margin pressures for traditional service providers. "Global trade and tariff worries resurfaced as well, with additional pressure arising from US President Donald Trump's warnings on trade deals and reports of possible national security tariffs." In addition, the "escalating US-Iran tensions, marked by embassy staff evacuations and Iran's warning of wider regional escalation, intensified risk aversion," Nair wrote in a note. The day's slide in the market left investors poorer by Rs 5.6 lakh crore with BSE's market capitalisation now at Rs 465.6 lakh crore, official data showed.

Among the 30 sensex constituents, 23 closed in the red with HDFC Bank, L&T and Infosys contributing the most to sensex's day's four-digit loss on Tuesday.

SBI 3rd most valued entity in India

Mumbai: State Bank of India, the largest lender in India on Tuesday jumped past Bharti Airtel in terms of market capitalisation to become the third most valued entity in India. At Tuesday's close, SBI had a market capitalisation of Rs 11.3 lakh crore, compared to Bharti Airtel at almost Rs 11.1 lakh crore, BSE data showed. TNN

'Indian IT grew 6.1% to $315 billion in FY26'

Exports Up 5.6%; AI Revenue Hits $12Bn Mark As Spending Shifts To AI-Led Deals

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Mumbai: The doomsayers may need to hold off before writing an obituary for the Indian IT sector. Navigating twin disruptions — intensifying geopolitical uncertainty and the rapid rise of AI-native competitors — India's technology industry is leaning on its core strengths of scale, engineering depth and delivery resilience.

Despite AI-led disruption that rattled stock prices, India's tech sector is still on track to grow 6.1% to $315 billion in FY26, according to Nasscom's Annual Strategic Review 2026.

The growth reflects steady demand across segments even as enterprises recalibrate spending priorities. The 2026 revenue mix underscores the industry's diversified base: IT services at $149 billion, BPM at $59 billion, ER&D (engineering R&D) at $63 billion, software products at $33 billion and hardware at $11 billion. Indian IT exports are projected to rise 5.6% year on year to $246 billion in FY26 from $233 billion in FY25.

Nasscom president Rajesh Nambiar described FY25 and FY26 as a structural transition phase for the industry. While 2025 was marked by global economic caution and geopolitical shifts, he said technology spending was not cut — it was redirected. Enterprises prioritised resilience, productivity and AI-led transformation over discretionary expansion. AI, he said, moved from experimentation to execution. "Industry AI revenue is estimated at $10-$12 billion in FY26, contributing roughly 3%-4% of overall industry revenue and up to 5%-6% for some companies. AI is embedded in most enterprise proposals today," he said at the Nasscom Technology Leadership Forum (NTLF) 2026 in Mumbai. Around 75% of the top 25 providers acquired AI-native capabilities, 85% now have agent platforms and 35%-40% offer verticalised AI solutions.

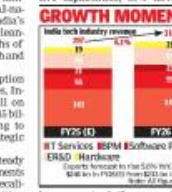
Even as AI reshapes delivery models, the industry remains a net hirer. Total headcount rose by 1.55 lakh to 5.8 million in 2026, marginally higher than last year's addition of 1.38 lakh. Though headcount growth stagnated, Indian IT is quick to reinvent for the AI cycle, with demand shifting towards domain-specialised and industry-focused roles. Much of the incremental hiring is being driven by global capability centres (GCCs) for the third consecutive year, which continue to expand their mandates in India.

Nambiar pointed to a widening divergence between revenue and employment growth. "The industry remains a net hirer, though employment growth is moderating as non-linearity increases. Reskilling and capability transformation are central priorities," he said.

Nasscom chairperson Sindhu Gangadharan said AI's deeper integration across business functions will fundamentally redesign roles. "We will see roles shaped around outcomes, deeper specialisation and significantly higher AI fluency. The focus is on building 'Human + AI' teams, investing in continuous skilling and converting efficiency gains into growth," she said.

Practal Analytics founder and CEO Srikanth Velamakanni captured the dual nature of the shift. AI is simultaneously expanding and compressing work within companies, he said, with the net effect reflected in moderate hiring numbers. Traditional tasks are shrinking even as new areas of work open up. Importantly, AI is now integral to business development. "There is no chance of winning business without AI embedded in how you solve problems. AI is now a fundamental part of every proposal," he said.

Looking ahead, Nasscom sees FY26 and FY27 as investment years, with companies focusing on AI-led scaling, operational efficiency and innovation to drive the next phase of growth.



Govt targets ₹1.8L cr from PSU public offers by FY30

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New Delhi: The Centre aims to raise nearly Rs 1.8 lakh crore through equity divestment in state run firms led by initial public offers (IPOs) over the next four years as part of the second wave of the national monetisation plan, data released by govt's policy think tank Niti Aayog showed.

The National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) 2.0, which was unveiled on Monday, showed plans to raise Rs 83,700 crore through partial equity divestment in rail public sector undertakings (PSUs). The mode of monetisation would be through IPOs and follow on public offers (FPOs). "The proceeds from this divestment are expected to be re-invested back in development of rail infrastructure," according to the Niti Aayog document.

In the power sector, the document lays out a plan to raise Rs 31,000 crore through equity dilution of the step down subsidiaries of PSUs which are engaged in generation and renewable energy.

> **IPO-led stake sales to drive 2nd phase of national asset monetisation plan**

Similarly, the plan is to go in for equity dilution of GAIL Gas through IPO of minority stake, which is expected to raise Rs 3,100 crore.

In the Civil Aviation sector, divestment of Airports Authority of India (AAI) holdings in subsidiaries and joint ventures is expected to yield Rs 13,590 crore and the mode of monetisation is through the IPO, FPO and private placement route, according to the NMP 2.0 document. For coal projects, the monetisation pipeline sets a target of raising Rs 48,350 crore from equity dilution of subsidiaries under Coal India and renewable assets under NLC India through the IPO, FPO route.

Since 2024 govt has stopped setting any specific target for stake sales in state-run firms, while the privatisation of PSUs have slowed due to a string of factors. Govt aims to raise Rs 80,000 crore from divestment and asset monetisation in 2025-27, a sharp increase from the revised estimate of nearly Rs 34,000 crore. Officials have said that the bulk of the Rs 80,000 crore would be through asset monetisation.

Weight-loss drugs set to become cheaper

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New Delhi: The country's anti-obesity market is headed for a pricing shake-up, with a clutch of pharma companies readying plans to launch affordable versions of the blockbuster weight-loss medicines Wegovy and Ozempic. This follows the expiry of the patent of semaglutide, the key ingredient in these injectable medications, on March 20, clearing the entry of over six-to-seven players, including Sun Pharma, Zydus Lifesciences, Dr Reddy's and Nacco Pharma, on Day 1 (March 21) itself.

> **Generic semaglutide entry set to halve prices, expand obesity therapy market rapidly**

More companies are expected to enter the race over next few months, setting the stage for lower-priced prices in a segment, that has so far been dominated by expensive innovator brands.

Analysts expect the nearly Rs 3400 crore weight-loss market to double in a year. Overall, the antidiabetic therapy market grew over 15% in Jan, led by the rapid uptake of innovative therapies, including Eli Lilly's Mounjaro at Rs 112 crore sales, the latest data from research firm, Pharmarack said.

"Lower-priced generics are expected to sharply widen access, with the market expected to grow 10-fold over next few years as competition intensifies," they told **TOI**. Pricing details are not available but analysts expect generic version of semaglutide will be priced roughly 50% cheaper — around Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,500 per month (for the start dose), translating into substantial gains for patients.

Tech leaders say Cobol overhaul remains complex

▸ Continued from page 1

So it's increasingly becoming difficult to maintain these systems, and to rectify issues if something goes wrong. For that reason, converting the 900 billion lines of code in Cobol into more modern programming languages is seen as important.

But that currently is expensive to do. Anthropic's contention is that Claude now makes it substantially more affordable. Following the stock collapse, IBM's senior vice-president for software, Rob Thomas, responded that transitioning legacy Cobol code does not solve the broader modernisation challenge. "Translating code is one thing. Modernising a platform is something else entirely. The two are not the same, and the gap between them is where most enterprises run into trouble," he said in a blogpost. Perhaps partly in response to this, the stock recovered almost 6% in early trade on Tuesday.

Asked about Anthropic's announcement and its impact on legacy systems, HCLTech CEO C Vijayakumar said while technology is advancing rapidly, deploying it in complex enterprises is gradual. "The hype around instant modernisation often overlooks the real-world complexity of enterprise landscapes," he said at Nasscom Technology Leadership Forum in Mumbai. Indian IT firms have a significant book of business from banking and financial services.

Practal Analytics founder & CEO Srikanth Velamakanni said if AI can bring down costs of code conversion, it would be a big opportunity for Indian IT. Currently, he said, migrating Cobol code is about $15-$20 per line. For a 50-million-line system, that could amount to $700 million to $1 billion and would take over a year. "The risk is high, complexity immense, and CIOs naturally avoid such high-stakes projects unless necessary. AI changes that dynamic. With AI-assisted modernisation, the cost per line could drop to about $2. That turns a $1billion, 18-month project into $100 million," he said.

Fastag may go tagless with AI, says DPI's key architect

Supriya.Roy
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Bengaluru: India's next-generation Fastag system may soon eliminate the need for a physical tag. Vehicles could be identified via roadside cameras, with type and number detected in real time, and tolls automatically deducted without a windshield sticker, said **Pramod Varma**, a key architect of India's digital public infrastructure (DPI), on Tuesday.

Speaking at the Cerevo-Zen Conversational AI Summit in Bengaluru, Varma said such computer vision-led systems represent the next layer of India's digital evolution, embedding AI directly into public infrastructure at the edge. The proposed system, he added, would process thousands of vehicles per minute on highways.

Varma highlighted a broader shift from building digital identity to enabling "digital agency." Over the past decade, India formalised nearly a billion people into the economy through platforms such as Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker and account aggregators. Citing global studies, he said India achieved in seven to eight years what might otherwise have taken five decades.

Apple expands Bengaluru office, adds 1.2 lakh sqft

Bengaluru: Apple India has leased an additional 1.2 lakh sft at Embassy Zenith in Bengaluru, taking its total space in the tower to nearly 3.9 lakh sft, according to documents sourced from Propstack.

The fresh lease, signed with landlord MAC Charles (India), covers the ground to fourth floors, with a chargeable area of 1.2 lakh sft. Effective September 25 last year, the 10-year agreement carries a monthly rental of Rs 2.81 per sft (around Rs 2.8 crore) and a security deposit of Rs 14.2 crore. Annual escalations of 4.5% will begin on April 5 this year.

In April last year, Apple had leased 2.46 lakh sft from the fifth to thirteenth floors at the same rate, paying Rs 6.3 crore monthly. Combined, Apple's Embassy Zenith footprint now totals roughly 3.8 lakh sft, with a monthly rental commitment of just over Rs 9 crore. TNN

Noel outlines conditions for Chandrasekaran's third term

▸ Continued from page 1

At the meeting, Noel Tata listed out performance criteria on which Chandrasekaran should deliver before he is granted third term. These include turning around or reducing losses in aviation and digital services; ensuring heavy capital expenditure in high-risk semiconductors and batteries units does not drain Tata Sons' cash, as it can no longer raise debt after surrendering its status as a core investment company based on RBI norms; maintaining the company's current unlisted status given the fact that an IPO would loosen Tata Trusts' holdover it; and speeding up talks with Shapoorji Pallonji Group to provide them an exit from Tata Sons.

Tata Digital, which was set up five years ago and has bought Bigbasket and Img, made the second-highest loss of Rs 4,410 crore in the group, according to Tata Sons' FY25 report.

Tata Trusts chairman Noel Tata and vice chairman Venu Srinivasan represent the philanthropic foundations on the board of Tata Sons. The other Tata Sons board members are independent directors Harish Manwani and Anita George, and company CFO Saurabh Agarwal. On Tuesday, George pointed out that new businesses, especially capital-guzzling ones, take time to mature. Between FY20 and FY25, Tata Sons invested Rs 1 lakh crore in incorporating companies, its FY25 report showed.

Lawyers said even if the majority supported the extension, the item would not go through as Tata Trusts' nominees have a veto right. Last July, Tata Trusts passed a resolution for extending Chandrasekaran's term for another five years. Six months later, with the issue before the Tata Sons board for further approval, the principal shareholders are clearly taking a relook at the issue. People close to Noel had sounded out some Tata Trusts trustees if he had their backing to defer and rediscuss Chandrasekaran's extension. They were, however, advised it can be changed only with unanimous approval. "This is the second time that the Tata Sons chairman's performance has come under scrutiny after Cyrus Mistry," said an industry observer. People said circumstances have changed since the resolution was passed by Tata Trusts and evolving internal dynamics have shaped the latest development around leadership continuity at the Tata group.

The group faced a series of setbacks last year. Air India suffered a calamitous plane crash, while a cyberattack at JLR was severe enough to dent the UK's GDP.

Gadgets Now Awards 2025 recognise tech excellence

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Times of India Gadgets Now Awards 2025 celebrated last year's standout gadgets at an event on Monday where technology met glamour. The event drew an eclectic gathering of distinguished guests who came together to recognise technological excellence across key categories, including smartphones, smartwatches, audio products, television and more.

This year, the Awards that are in its 6th edition went a step further and also recognised India's leading influencers and creators who are redefining the tech content landscape.

The winners included Samsung Galaxy S25 Ultra, which scored a double win as the Best Smartphone Editor's Choice and Popular Choice.

Apple iPhone 17 was adjudged the Best Premium Smartphone Editor's Choice, while Samsung Galaxy S 25 won the Popular Choice in the same category.

Samsung once again picked up 2 awards as Galaxy Z Fold 7 was crowned the Editor's Choice and Popular Choice winner in the Best Foldable Smartphone category.

Samsung Galaxy Book 5 Pro won the Editor's Choice Best AI-powered gadget, while Nexsapien Neo 1 was the Popular Choice winner.

THE TIMES OF INDIA presents GADGETS NOW AWARDS 2025

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

	Editor's Choice	People's Choice
Best Smartphone 01 The Year	Samsung Galaxy S25 Ultra	Samsung Galaxy S25 Ultra
Best Premium Smartphone	Apple iPhone 17	Samsung Galaxy S25
Best Affordable Smartphone	Nothing Phone 3(a)	Samsung Galaxy A17
Best Gaming Laptop	Lenovo Legion Pro 7i	Alienware 18 Area-51
Best Laptop 01 The Year	HP OmniBook Flip X	Samsung Galaxy Book 5 Pro
Best Smartwatch 01 The Year	Google Pixel Watch 4	Samsung Galaxy Watch 8 Classic

Full list of winners at www.timesofindia.com

AI Career Edge PODCAST

Agentic AI Era | What to learn when software builds software

Vishal Chahal
VICE PRESIDENT, IBM INDIA SOFTWARE LABS

Readers can share their questions on the YouTube chat and we'll ask Vishal Chahal the best ones

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Wednesday, 25th Feb, 5pm - 6pm

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Sreedharan K S
DIRECTOR OF COMPLIANCE, ZOHO CORPORATION

Sudarshan drives data strategy at Newcastle FC

Amin Ali

On a match night at St James' Park, home of English Premier League side Newcastle United, when the stadium hums and sways to every pass, tackle, move and goal by the home team, emotion drives everything. Behind the noise, another game unfolds quietly. This one is built on code, cameras and millions of data points. That invisible game is now central to how the club trains, competes, plans the season and even buys players. And helping to run it is an Indian-origin technologist whose journey spans American classrooms, Silicon Valley, and Europe's biggest leagues.

Sudarshan Gopaladesikan is Newcastle United's technical director. Technology at the club supports almost every aspect on and off the field. But Sudarshan's focus is firmly on the football side. His job is to help players stay fit, help coaches prepare smarter and help the club make better decisions in the transfer market.

Sudarshan was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to parents from Tamil Nadu. He studied mathematics at Swarthmore College, a leading liberal arts institution. His career began in technology at Microsoft, where he worked on the team that developed Power BI. A project with Real Madrid introduced him to elite football. From there, he moved into club roles with Benfica in Portugal and the Atlanta in Italy before joining Newcastle United.

Data, data, data

Sudarshan's role in Newcastle is heavily dependent on data. And the data flows during a match, and as soon as a match ends. By the following morning, Newcastle would have received detailed digital files from specialist providers. One stream is event data, which logs every ball action, such as passes, shots, tackles and interceptions. A single game can produce three to four thousand such events.

The second stream is tracking data. Stadium camera systems capture the position of every player and the ball around 25 frames per second. Over 90 minutes, that becomes roughly three to four million frames of positional information from just one match. Imagine what this is across an entire season!

Analysts clean and transform the data, and process them through cloud systems before turning them into visual reports, key metrics and short, focused video clips. It is presented to coaches as clear insights linked directly to movements from games.

Analysts study how Newcastle functioned in possession. Where did they break defensive lines with passes? Where did they struggle to progress the ball? What happened after they regained possession? Out of possession, they look at where chances were conceded and how well the defensive shape held. Set pieces, now responsible for a significant share of goals in top level football, are examined in detail.

These findings feed directly into training. Training sessions too are filmed from multiple angles, sometimes using drones, and matched against the tactical priorities identified through data. Coaches narrow the message to a handful of key themes players must carry into the next game.

Monitoring physical performance

Technology also plays a vital role in monitoring physical performance. Every player's locomotion is tracked, says Sudarshan, including total distance covered, maximum speed, acceleration, deceleration and changes of direction. Metrics such as repeated high-intensity efforts show whether a player can sprint again and again over short periods, a crucial quality in modern football.

Off the pitch, fitness is monitored through a mix of testing and medical data – strength assessments of major muscle groups, jump tests to help measure explosive power. Blood markers after matches can indicate stress and recovery levels. Sleep and diet are monitored, sometimes through wearable devices and sometimes through detailed questionnaires, depending on how comfortable players are with certain technologies.

> Sport, Sudarshan says, is no longer a niche career path. With billions being invested globally, people who can build evidence-based systems and translate complex analysis into simple, actionable insights. Big clubs need scientific and data-based explanations for why they spent big amounts. An Indian tech firm, Random Walk, currently helps him in some of his projects.

Solving for starting team, substitutions

All of this context shapes one of the most debated aspects of the modern game: starting team and substitutions. To fans, it can be baffling when a player doesn't start or one who looks lively is taken off. Inside the club, that decision is often backed by data.

During matches, Newcastle monitors players in real-time. These track not just how far a player has run, but how many high intensity actions he has performed and how closely they are clustered. A player might look fine to the eye, but the data can show he has reached a physical load that significantly increases injury risk, especially when recent matches and training sessions are taken into account. The aim also is not only to win that day's match but to keep key players fit for the weeks and months ahead.

When the transfer window opens, much of the same data underpins recruitment decisions. Newcastle uses event and tracking information to build detailed profiles of potential signings. They look beyond statistics, measuring how players move, create space, defend and cope with physical demands. Recruitment, Sudarshan says, becomes a complex optimisation exercise, balancing performance data, contract details, league strength and financial considerations to find players who best fit Newcastle's way of playing.

GITHUB REPOSITORY CTRL+F(IND)

A GitHub repository is an online space where you store and manage a project's files, usually software code. It keeps everything in one place, including documents, images and past versions of the work. GitHub tracks changes over time, so you can see who edited what and restore earlier versions if needed. Multiple people can work on the same repository without overwriting each other's contributions. It also allows users to suggest improvements, report issues and discuss updates. In simple terms, a GitHub repository is a shared digital folder that helps people build, organise and improve projects together efficiently.

Machine learning for machines

This tyre factory's efficiency soars

Sensors, computer vision models, and artificial intelligence have combined to help CEAT Tyres' Chennai factory reduce defects, waste and energy use, and improve labour and machine efficiency. The factory today runs on algorithms

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Enter the large Ceat Tyres factory located in the dusty industrial belt of Sriperumbudur on the outskirts of Chennai and you are greeted by humming machines and blinking sensor lights. The manufacturing process here involves number crunching and monitoring computer screens more than heavy lifting. Over the past few years, 70% of the shop floor roles have been converted from heavy physical labour to skill-based automated work. That has also meant a lot more participation of women.

30% WORKFORCE IS WOMEN: Automation and digitisation have made hiring of women easier. Earlier, tyre building involved manual loading of rubber compounds, handling heavy beads or steel belts and physically demanding drum operations. Automated tyre-building machines standardise each step. Ergonomic fixtures and lift-assist devices reduce load, while conveyor-based tyre movement allows women to participate in building and curing operations without heavy lifting. Around 30% of CEAT Chennai facility workforce is now women. CEAT now aims to replicate this success across its other facilities.

Managing mixing complexities

Each tyre has multiple compounds and materials, and these change depending on purpose – such as driving a car on a normal day, or driving the same car in snowy conditions, or pulling a truck. Durability and flexibility vary by each use case. Debashish Roy, CEAT's chief digital transformation officer, says the mixing process is the critical first step in tyre manufacturing. Think of it as the industrial equivalent of kneading dough in a bakery. In this stage, raw ingredients such as natural and synthetic rubber, carbon black and chemicals are thrown into a massive mixer to create the base material.

The goal is to blend these ingredients until they are perfectly consistent. Traditionally, factory machines followed a strict, pre-set recipe. For example, they might be programmed to mix for three minutes. However, the machine was blind and it did not know if the rubber was perfectly mixed after 2.5 minutes or if it needed four minutes. To make things more complex, natural rubber varies by batch. It might be harder or softer depending on the season. Even the temperature of the mixer changes if it has been running all day. These parameters change how fast the rubber melts. Because the system could not adjust to these changes in real time, the factory had to often run the mixers longer than necessary. This led to wasted time and lower daily output.

Roy says they built a gradient boosting regression model (machine learning model) to optimise these variations. This system continuously monitors key parameters such as temperature and energy consumption by comparing real-time data against historical "golden" batches. Based on this comparison, intelligent adjustments are made to maintain optimal conditions and improve consistency in the mixing operation.

This has resulted in an 18% reduction in mixing cycle time, a 29% reduction in power consumption, and a 32% increase in master mixer capacity. These are crucial given the factory's scale. The company now produces 550 different types of tyres in an average week, a significant jump from just 100 six years ago.

Predicting die dimensions

As the company expands its presence across geographies, its need to develop new tyres for different terrains and environments is growing. To develop new tyres, CEAT has to design new dies. This is the process of creating the metal template or profile cutter through which hot rubber is squeezed to create specific treads, the part that touches the road. Think of it like toothpaste, where you squeeze the paste out in a specific shape depending on the nozzle attached to it. However, designing this metal plate is difficult because rubber is elastic. As soon as it is pushed out of the metal die, it relaxes and expands in a phenomenon called die swelling. Roy says if you want a rubber strip that is 200 mm wide, you cannot cut a 200 mm hole. You need to cut a 180 mm hole because the rubber will swell by 20 mm. The exact number depends on the chemical recipe of the rubber, the temperature and the speed of the machine.

Each tyre variant has roughly 60 data points, ranging from compound viscosity to machine parameters. In the past, engineers mapped these points manually on spreadsheets to predict how the rubber would behave. This non-linear calculation was often inaccurate and required up to three physical trials to get it right. This iterative process resulted in longer time to take products to market and generated compound scrappage.

To address this, the company deployed a machine learning model based on Gaussian process regression. This system predicts accurate die dimensions, and has resulted in a 33% reduction in time-to-market and a 36% reduction in wastage.

Roy has also deployed AI models and solutions for export container optimisation and machine performance management. His team has built an agentic AI solution that helps junior engineers quickly understand what is wrong when a machine breaks down. It converts unstructured breakdown resolution videos into a searchable knowledge base, and retrieves past solutions via a conversational chatbot. This has enhanced troubleshooting efficiency.

DECENTRALISED DIGITAL TEAMS

CEAT has built the tech solutions ground up with internal teams, and is thanks to digitisation efforts that began in 2021, involving the installation of sensors, manufacturing execution systems and dashboards. The company now invests 10% of its manufacturing capital expenditure on digital transformation initiatives. To bridge the gap between technical teams and shop-floor reality, it introduced a new role called business translators. These are folks with strong technical skills and work directly with shop floor operators to identify pain points.

Debashish Roy, chief digital transformation officer, says it's a decentralised digital team. Centralised teams, he says, may take years to learn a process.

WEF Lighthouse

The initiatives have brought cultural shifts where employees are encouraged to think in data driven terms. Teams regularly attend external conferences and hackathons to learn best-in-class technologies. They evaluate if a production issue is a valid business problem and whether a usable data exists before developing AI use cases. The technology at the Chennai factory has been validated by experts from IIT Madras and recognised with a Lighthouse certification from the World Economic Forum. The Lighthouse awards are given to leaders in the field of technology-driven industrial transformation.

Big productivity gains

The digital initiatives have resulted in improved yields and lower energy usage, and that in turn has reduced factory conversion costs (total expense required to transform raw materials into finished products) by 20-30%. The time from order placement to dispatch has been cut by more than half, while export turnaround times have dropped from 120 days to 55 days.

Purpose, technology & people shape the way I lead and live

Ruchika Panesar

My journey in leadership began long before I held a formal title – in front of a glowing computer screen, surrounded by lines of code. In those early days as an engineer, I learned to lead not by speaking the loudest, but by showing up – prepared, curious, and unafraid to ask the questions others avoided. Confidence, I discovered, isn't always loud; sometimes it's built quietly, one solved problem at a time.

From self-doubt to self-inquiry: There were moments when I questioned whether I belonged. The most defining lessons came not from recognition, but from the times I had to pause, learn, and begin again. I stopped asking "Why me?" and started asking "What can I learn here?" That shift – from self-doubt to self-inquiry – became the foundation of my leadership and shaped how I approach technology itself: as a space of constant learning, reinvention, and humility.

CAREER LADDER FOR WOMEN

One mentor taught me clarity, another compassion: I've been fortunate to find mentors who saw something in me before I did. They didn't just open doors; they left them open for others. One taught me clarity, another compassion – both helped me understand that leadership isn't about hierarchy, it's about connection. True leadership lies in creating space where others can see their potential reflected back at them.

Inclusion must be a daily habit: Technology has been both my canvas and my teacher. From building enterprise platforms to leading digital transformation at scale, I've seen how innovation thrives where curiosity meets inclusion. The best ideas rarely come from homogenous teams; they come from diverse voices unafraid to challenge patterns. That's why I believe inclusion isn't a corporate initiative – it's a daily habit. Representation is catalytic. It changes what people believe is possible.

Stay curious and keep learning: Technology keeps changing rapidly, but women who succeed in tech do so because they stay curious and keep learning. My own curiosity has been tested in different parts of my life – from work meetings across time zones to reading bedtime stories to my daughter. Each of these experiences matters to me, and technology is what helps me balance and connect these worlds – my professional and personal life.

I find balance in books, art and Lego: At NatWest, I play an active role in shaping our digital and technology vision across regions and cultures – while staying grounded in my daily rituals. My mornings begin with faith and stillness before the day unfolds. I find balance in books, joy in art and Lego, and endless energy in the people I work with every day. I don't lead with labels, but I do believe representation matters. I'm a business leader who happens to be a woman, and I've learned you don't need to choose between ambition and authenticity – you can lead with both.

Ruchika Panesar is country head for India, and chief digital & information officer for functions at NatWest Group

The Skills You Really Need to WORK ON CHIPS

Akhil George & Sajit John | TNN

AI CAREER EDGE

> Semiconductors are a confluence of many engineering fields. You need depth in your core discipline, but you must also understand how it connects with others. Strong fundamentals are essential, and there's no substitute for hands-on work. When you apply what you learn and build things yourself, that's when real understanding happens.
> **– Gokul Subramaniam** | PRESIDENT, INTEL INDIA

They are so small that billions of transistors can sit on a chip no bigger than a fingernail, yet they are powerful enough to run data centres, smartphones and new artificial intelligence systems. Semiconductor chips are among the most extraordinary feats of human engineering. Building them demands work at a scale measured in nanometres, where a tiny error can derail an entire product. It is at this microscopic frontier that careers in AI and semiconductors are increasingly being forged.

Gokul Subramaniam, president of Intel India, believes that while AI may dominate headlines, it is silicon that makes the revolution possible. "Compute and semiconductors are the foundation of AI," he says. "Everything AI does ultimately runs on chips."

That foundation is complex. **Designing a chip is not a single job but a chain of interlocking disciplines.** There is chip architecture, circuit design and verification. There is testing after the chip is manufactured. There is the board it sits on, the way heat is managed, and how the final system works in a laptop, a server rack or a car. AI tools are now being used across all these stages. "We use AI right from early design to validation," Subramaniam explains. "In many cases it starts as an assistant, helping engineers build the first version faster. As the tools improve, they can take on more responsibility."

For students and young professionals, however, he offers a clear warning: **do not confuse using AI tools with understanding engineering. "Strong fundamentals are necessary— there is no shortcut and no compromise there," he says. In other words, before relying on AI to design circuits or optimise systems, you must understand how they work.**

Semiconductors sit at the crossroads of multiple branches of engineering. Electrical engineering shapes the circuits. Computer science influences processor design and software. Mechanical and materials engineering affect packaging and heat dissipation. Even chemistry and physics play a role in manufacturing. "It's a confluence of many engineering fields," Subramaniam says. **To build a future-ready career, students must go deep in one area but remain aware of how others connect to it.**

He suggests thinking in two dimensions. The first is your core discipline — for instance, electrical engineering or computer architecture. The second is the domain where the chip will be used: data centres, edge devices, robotics, automobiles or defence systems. "The requirements of those domains shape how you design and manufacture the chip," he says. Understanding both gives engineers an edge.

AI, meanwhile, is evolving at remarkable speed. Unlike earlier technology shifts such as the rise of the PC or the internet, he says, "AI is moving much faster and changing much more quickly". That makes curiosity essential. Engineers cannot afford to ignore it. They must experiment, test and learn continuously.

Keep tinkering

One habit he returns to repeatedly in this context is **to tinker with things.** When hiring graduates, he looks beyond marksheets. "We look for depth in fundamentals, but also curiosity," he says. "Have you built something? Have you experimented? What did you learn from it?" A GitHub repository, a circuit built in a lab, a simulation project that failed and was improved — all signal practical engagement.

He does see gaps when trying to hire fresh graduates however. Sometimes graduates know the theory but have not applied it. "If you focus only on exams and not on projects, weaknesses will show up," he cautions. **The remedy is to use internships, summer breaks and open-source tools to gain hands-on experience.** Students need not wait for perfect institutional support; they can form teams, seek mentors and build independently.

For mid-career professionals already in the industry, Subramaniam says it's worth asking yourself how AI can make you more efficient in your job. Think of AI as an exoskeleton — something that enhances your capability rather than replaces it. At the same time, be mindful of data security and company policies when using public AI tools.

Above all, Subramaniam urges young engineers to lean into excitement rather than anxiety. Engineering has always evolved, but the pace is now faster than ever. The chips at the heart of AI may be unimaginably small, yet the opportunity to work on them is vast. Those who combine solid fundamentals, cross-disciplinary awareness and a willingness to experiment will be best placed to thrive at this intersection of silicon and intelligence.

"WEST INDIES' LEFT-ARM SPINNERS WERE OUTSTANDING. IN T20s, FINGER SPINNERS TRY TO STAY AWAY FROM THE BATTER'S HITTING ARC, BUT GUDAKESH MOTIE AND AKEAL HOSEIN WERE VERY DIFFERENT."
—Andi Kumble, former India captain

TURNAROUND TIME

Forced Into A Must-Win Situation Following The Big Loss To South Africa, India Will Be Looking For A Quick Reboot In The Game Against Zimbabwe At The Chepauk On Thursday...

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SET TO RETURN? Sanju Samson at the nets in Chennai on Tuesday

Chennai: The real World Cup starts now. India's humbling loss to South Africa has ensured that the cloak of invincibility has been stripped away. The defeat has forced the hosts into 'knockout' mode, starting with the Super 8 match against Zimbabwe at the MA Chidambaram Stadium here on Thursday. It's essentially a round-of-16 match followed by a 'virtual quarterfinal' against West Indies in Kolkata on March 1. However, there's a catch — if West Indies beat South Africa on Thursday afternoon and South Africa beat Zimbabwe, then even two wins may not be enough for India to make the semifinals.

West Indies' 107-run win against Zimbabwe, coupled with India's 76-run loss to South Africa, has left a massive gulf in the net run rate (NRR) which even two big wins may not be able to bridge. While West Indies have +5.35, India have -3.8. Even before they take the field against Zimbabwe on Thursday, Suryakumar Yadav will pray that South Africa keep their part of the bargain and beat Windies in the day game.

However, those are factors India cannot control. What India can do, however, is beat Zimbabwe handsomely to boost their morale, which has taken a sound beating. Nothing worked for them against South Africa, but then that was not an aberration. Abhishek Sharma is carrying the burden of four failures, Tilak Varma has looked a shadow of the batter who won India the Asia Cup final in Sept last year and Surya hasn't fired on all cylinders since the USA game. When three of the top four are struggling for form, it's a losing battle at this level.

The problem with this Indian team is that the quality of the backups isn't great either. Sanju Samson, if pushed in ahead of Tilak and Ishan is asked to bat at No. 3, will be a forced selection. Sanju has done nothing extraordinary with the bat in the chances that he has got so far, including the one in the World Cup. His inclusion will just be a desperate ploy to plug a hole.

While that's one part of the story, the obvious course correction that India will do at Chepauk is to bring back Axar Patel in place of Washington Sundar. Making Axar sit out against SA didn't make tactical sense and backfired badly.

The one relief for India going into Thursday's game will be the situation Zimbabwe are in. They made the Super 8s at the expense of Australia and on the back of some extremely spunky performances in Sri Lanka. But the conditions in Sri Lanka, which favour their kind of slower bowlers who love taking pace off the ball, are significantly different from conditions in India.

Zimbabwe found this out the hard way against the West Indies at the Wankhede and the conditions at the Chepauk are likely to be similar. If two of India's big hitters click on the unusually batting-friendly pitch here, the game should be over as Zimbabwe don't seem to have the firepower to chase, say, a 200-plus total.

Zimbabwe coach Justin Sammons explained how the inexperience of playing in India can be a major impediment for his team. "There's probably only three in our starting XI that have played in India before. So, for eight players it's the first time. These are completely different conditions (to Lanka), grounds are smaller, so there's massive learning that the group will take. We'll pack the disappointment and move on (from the West Indies game)," Sammons said.

The coach knows how hungry India will be to turn things around after what happened in Ahmedabad. Their approach will be pretty much similar to West Indies', whereby Abhishek & Co. will look to demolish Zimbabwe by the sheer weight of runs. What gives Sammons a little hope is the fact that the Chepauk playing area is slightly bigger than the Wankhede, which should give their bowlers some sort of respite.

"India are not going to hold back. So we have to stay calm and think on our feet and try to change things up a little to disrupt the rhythm of their batters. Chennai will be a bit bigger and it probably will make things a little easier," Sammons said.

For Zimbabwe to make a match of it, a lot of things have to fall in place, with the form of mystery spinner Sikandar Raza and pacesman Blessing Muzarabani being on top of the list. The duo leaked 94 off seven overs in Mumbai and it's on Indian power hitters to make it a repeat show and keep the hopes alive.

HOW THEY STAND

Teams	M	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
Super 8s, Group 1						
WI	1	1	0	0	2	5.35
SA	1	1	0	0	2	3.80
Ind	1	0	1	0	0	-3.80
Zim	1	0	1	0	0	-5.35
Super 8s, Group 2						
Eng	2	2	0	0	4	1.49
Pak	2	0	1	1	1	-0.46
NZ	1	0	0	1	1	-
SL	1	0	1	0	0	-2.55

Note: Top two from each group will play semis

TIME TO ASK APOLLO 24|7

HAIR LOSS?
Iron deficiency drives hair loss—and affects 1 in 2 Indian women.
Scan for a quick check.
For any Health Query Chat with Ask Apollo 24|7
Apollo 24|7 Clinical consultation by Healthian India

BLUEPRINT FOR REVIVAL

India's 76-run defeat to South Africa has exposed tactical flaws, selection difficulties and execution lapses. Here are some key corrections they could make...

REMOVE LEFT-HEAVY TOP ORDER: Break the three-left-handers cluster at the top that even part-time off-spinners like Aiden Markram and Salman Agha have exploited. Bring in a right-hander for the opening slot or at No. 3 to force opposition to re-think match-ups.

RECALL AXAR PATEL: The designated vice-captain's absence was felt against South Africa. **Axar's** ability to bowl defensive lines in the Powerplay or stifle runs in the middle overs can provide the control India lacked in Ahmedabad. Also adds depth to the lower order with bat.

FIX POWERPLAY APPROACH: Powerplay batting has lacked clarity. Early scoreboard pressure has been allowed to build. Mindless slogging hasn't reaped rewards. Balance intent and common sense with smart shot selection. Attack favourable match-ups and improve strike rotation to avoid dot-ball pressure.

RETHINK HARDIK'S BOWLING ROLE: Ensure **Hardik Pandya** finishes his quota of overs before the 16th and use Dubeyah and Arshdeep as death-overs specialists. Hardik should either operate with the new ball or as middle-overs enforcer. He has more often than not leaked runs in the death overs, like against SA when he conceded 20 in the final over.

ADOPT TUNNEL VISION: The 'knives-are-out' atmosphere can lead to panic in the camp. The 'favourites' tag has turned into a burden. Focusing on one ball at a time could prevent another implosion.
—Hindol Sen

'Late-entrant' Abhishek looks to regain form

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Chennai: There was a lot happening in the India nets at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Tuesday, from Rinku Singh's absence — he has returned home to be with his ailing father — to Suryakumar Yadav's two-hour, range-hitting session.

That wasn't all, however. As Sanju Samson and Ishan Kishan went in to bat at two adjacent nets, Abhishek Sharma — India's shining light of the top-order — chose to bowl left-arm spin.

Batters came and went but Abhishek stood there beside the nets, talking to the spinners, trying to understand the turn that could be on offer from the black-soil pitch that will be used for the match against Zimbabwe on Thursday.

Finally, after almost 100 minutes of practice was over, Abhishek took up the bat. He didn't play any of the Team India spinners or pacers, it was only the practice bowlers.

Abhishek has been in wretched batting form after getting three ducks to start off. In the 13-ball 15 that he scored in Ahmedabad, there were seven false shots.

Given the situation the team is in at the moment, it is highly unlikely that he will be dropped. Probably what the team management was trying to do was to allow him to play some not-so-good bowling, so that Abhishek could connect his shots and get some form and confidence back. As the nets were folding up, Abhishek batted for half-an-hour and did connect, coming up with the kind of the crisp shots he is known for.

A few landed in the Chepauk stands as well as he tried to work on his game against off-spin, something that has been bothering him of late.

Rinku unlikely, maybe it's Sanju time? Sundar likely to sit out

As Rinku's absence was noticed and news filtered in that he had headed back home back home to be with his father, who is battling cancer, the left-hander's possible alternatives came into focus.

Axar Patel should walk into the squad given his versatility with bat and ball. In that case, if Sanju has to play, the only player that can miss out is Washington Sundar. Washington was picked for the South Africa game but didn't exactly shine with ball or bat. Sanju's inclusion could also mean that Ishan Kishan comes in at No. 3, a position which isn't exactly unfamiliar to him. That could force the likes of Tilak Varma and Suryakumar Yadav to come down by a slot.

Surya works on his range-hitting

Surya's strike-rate hasn't exactly been spectacular. Against South Africa he scored a 22-ball 18 that pushed India back. Tuesday's session suggested that he was trying to get his hitting range right. He was dismissed quite a few times by India's front-line spinners at the nets, but that was not stopping him from going for his shots. 'SKY', quite clearly, is trying to come out of his shell and the Zimbabwe bowling on a batting friendly pitch may provide him with the opportunity.

Harry books Eng's semis berth

Captain's Ton Seals The Deal In Nervy Affair To Put Pakistan In A Tight Spot

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Captain Harry Brook, coming out to bat at No. 3, scored a decisive century under pressure to steer England to an edge-of-the-seat, two-wicket victory against Pakistan in Pallekele on Tuesday. The nervy win sealed England's place in the T20 World Cup semifinal.

Chasing a competitive 185 on a sticky pitch, England lost three wickets to left-arm pacer Shaheen Afridi (4/30) in the Powerplay. However, Brook, who scored a 51-ball 100, single-handedly launched an aggressive counter-attack.

Brook used his feet well and hit the gaps with ease as he hit 10 boundaries and four sixes in his innings before England's lower order nearly made a mess of the chase.

With three runs remaining off the last over, Salman Ali Agha's surprising decision to hand the ball to left-arm pacer Salman Mirza — just when England's tail were looking all set — against the spinners — helped Jofra Archer comfortably put the first ball away for a boundary to seal the deal.

Opting to bat first, Pakistan were soon reduced to 27/2. Opener Sahibzada Farhan held the innings together with a knock of 63 off 45 balls even as Babar Azam struggled to get going with a 26-ball 26.

Fakhar Zaman and Shadab Khan chipped in with 35 off 16 and 23 off 11 respectively to set a challenging target on a pitch that offered significant turn for the spinners. After Farhan departed, Pakistan kept losing wickets at regular intervals.

As the chase began, Afridi sent back opening batter Phil Salt caught behind for a golden duck and then he dismissed the other opener Jos Buttler in a similar fashion. A few overs later, Jacob Bethell attempted to pull Afridi but was out caught by Sahibzada Farhan at deep square leg as England fell to 36-3 in five overs.

However, right before the Powerplay, Brook smashed left-arm spinner Mohammed Nawaz for back-to-back fours and a stunning six to begin England's recovery.

OUTSTANDING: England captain Harry Brook hits a six in Pallekele on Tuesday

1 Harry Brook is the first captain to register a hundred in the T20 World Cup, battering the 98-off 66 balls by Chris Gayle for West Indies vs India in Bridgetown on May 9, 2010.

3 Brook is the third England batter to register hundreds in all three formats in international cricket, the first two being Jos Buttler and David Malan.

SCOREBOARD

Pakistan: S Farhan lbw b Overton 63, S Ayub c Bethell b Archer 7, S Agha c Overton b Dawson 1, B Azam b Overton 26, F Zaman c Dawson b Rashid 35, S Khan run out 23, U Khan c Overton b Dawson 8, M Nawaz lbw b Dawson 8, S Shah Afridi c Curran b Archer 2, S Mirza not out 2; **Extras: (wb1, w3) 4; Total: (9 wkts) 184; FoW:** 1-14, 2-27, 3-73, 4-123, 5-132, 6-146, 7-146, 8-148, 9-164; **Bowling:** Archer 4-0-32-2, Overton 3-0-25-2, Dawson 4-0-24-3, Curran 3-0-24-0, Rashid 4-0-31-1, Jacks 2-0-27-0.

England: P Salt c Usman b Afridi 0, J Buttler c Usman b Afridi 2, H Brook b Afridi 100, I Bethell c Farhan b Afridi 8, T Banton c Usman b Tariq 2, S Curran c Nawaz b Tariq 16, W Jacks b Nawaz 28, J Overton st Usman b Nawaz 6, L Dawson not out 1, J Archer not out 5; **Extras: (lb1, w10) 4; Total: (8 wkts, 19.1 overs) 186; FoW:** 1-0, 2-17, 3-35, 4-50, 5-103, 6-135, 7-168, 8-181; **Bowling:** Afridi 4-0-30-4, Mirza 3.1-0-26-0, Ayub 2-0-21-0, Nawaz 3-0-26-2, Shadab 3-0-31-0, Tariq 4-0-31-2.

Result: England won by 2 wkts

Hetmyer saves his best for the big stage

West Indies Power Hitter Embraces New Role At No. 3, Quells Rumours Of Commitment Issues

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Mumbai: Shimron Hetmyer's commitment to the West Indies team came under scrutiny when he failed to board the flight during the 2022 T20 World Cup and was eventually dropped from the squad. Though he cited 'personal reasons' for his decision, it created a perception that he preferred globetrotting in franchise leagues over representing the Caribbean side.

A similar situation almost unfolded in this edition of the World Cup when the 29-year-old arrived in Kolkata just 24 hours before their opening clash against Scotland. Reports suggested visa issues had delayed his arrival, but whispers of history repeating itself grew louder.

The West Indies camp, however, chose not to make a fuss. They let the matter pass quietly — and the results have followed. Hetmyer has emerged as their leading run-scorer so far. The Rajasthan Royals batter has amassed 219 runs in five matches at a strike rate of 185.59.

Setting aside concerns about his past indiscretions, the left-hander has settled seamlessly into his new role at No. 3, taking over from Nicholas Pooran, who announced his retirement eight months ago.

Having spent considerable time alongside Hetmyer, West Indies skipper Shai Hope knew what he could offer if promoted up the order, a role he had occupied earlier in his career before being pushed down to a finisher's slot.

"The way he bats, I think sometimes he was wasted down the order. He's such a good player, can bat in all situations, against spin and pace. We properly utilise him in that phase (at No. 3), he comes out and plays with the freedom we want him to. He's been an asset for us, especially in this tournament. He has embraced the role," Hope said.

Hetmyer was elevated to No. 3 in July last year during the home T20I series against Australia. In nine matches since then, he has scored 365 runs at a strike rate of 184.34, significantly higher than his career strike rate of 138.89. The Guyanese attributes his recent success to improved clarity and simpler thinking. "I'm not overthinking my batting nowadays. In the past, I used to overthink a lot — about plans, about getting out. Now, I'm trying to think less, let the bat do the talking, and just react to the situation," Hetmyer said.

The initial nerves of returning to the No. 3 spot have also eased as the tournament has progressed. "It's definitely easier now because I've been doing it for a while. I understand the role better, I know how situations unfold, and having the backing of everyone in the team really helps. That support puts me in a much more comfortable headspace," he added.

His World Cup campaign so far has been defined by a fearless approach and an unswerving belief in his ability to clear the ropes. Against Scotland, he struck a 39-ball 64. On Monday night against Zimbabwe, Hetmyer turned the game on its head with a stunning 34-ball 85, featuring seven fours and seven sixes.

The bigger test now will be to replicate such performances in West Indies' next two key clashes.

SHIMRON IN T20Is

	M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Avg	SR	50	6s
Overall	80	70	7	1594	85	24.62	9	138.89	97
In T20 WC 2026	5	5	1	219	85	54.75	2	185.59	17

1 Shimron Hetmyer is the only batter to score 200+ runs at 50+ average with a strike rate of 175+ in this edition of the T20 World Cup.

452 Hetmyer's run-aggregate at an average of 50.22, including three fifties, in 17 innings is the highest in T20Is in 2026.

37 Sixes hit by Hetmyer are the most by a batter in T20Is this year. Ishan Kishan is next best (27).

17 Sixes hit by Hetmyer in 5 innings, the joint-most by a batter in a T20 World Cup, emulating Nicholas Pooran's record in 2024 (7 innings).

250 Recorded his best ever strike rate during his 85 (34 balls) vs Zim on Feb 23, 2026 (minimum 50 runs).
—Sankar Rajaram & Arnab

Batting blues may derail SL's campaign

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Sri Lanka's Super 8 campaign is teetering on the brink. Unless their batting rediscovers conviction, things could unravel very fast against a resolute and skilled New Zealand in Colombo on Wednesday.

Slow bowling and sluggish tracks have been Sri Lanka's bugbears for a while now. Factors exemplified by their failure to chase a modest 147 against England in Pallekele two nights ago. Sri Lanka batted as though intent alone could overpower the surface. Instead, the innings dissolved into a series of soft dismissals.

The challenge will be no kinder in Colombo. The R Premadasa Stadium's bigger boundaries and surface demands smart cricket. Yet, too often, Sri Lanka appear caught between forcing the pace and freezing against it. Sri Lanka batting coach Vikram Rathour acknowledged the miscalculations against England. "It's a T20 game, so obviously you come into a game looking to score as many runs as you can. So when the ball is not coming on to the bat, it's easier said than done," Rathour said, adding, "Are there better options for us? Yes, definitely. A couple of our wickets were lost because guys were pushing for a single. I don't think that was a great option here."

There were some positives. Opener Pathum Nissanka has offered composure at the top. Dunith Wellalage's left-arm spin has provided control. The seamers have competed. But these fragments mean little if their batters fail shine.

New Zealand, meanwhile, arrive equipped to exploit Sri Lanka's weaknesses. Mitchell Santner's team have been in Colombo for a week after finishing their group stage in India. A washout against Pakistan has stalled their rhythm, with both teams earning a solitary point from that game.

FACE-OFF

NZ vs SL — TV TIME: 7 PM — STAR SPORTS / JIOHOTSTAR

HEAD TO HEAD

NZ	SL
16	11

LAST FIVE MATCHES

NZ	NR	W	L	W	W
SL	L	L	W	W	W

VENUE: COLOMBO (RPS)

WEATHER 27°C

NZ	SL
6/10	5/4

Visitors Reach 284/2 To Dictate Terms Against Karnataka

PUNDIR'S UNBEATEN CENTURY POWERS J&K

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Hubballi: For the first hour of the Ranji Trophy title-contest here on Tuesday, the Karnataka pace trio of Prasidh Krishna, Vidhyadhar Patil and Vyshak Vijaykumar, tested the Jammu and Kashmir batters. They got movement off the seam and probed the opposers, who were beaten on several occasions.

Qamran Iqbal (6) and Yawer Hassan (88) lived dangerously, and the former, who came in as a replacement for Shubham Khajuria, who was ruled out after suffering a lower-back spasm, perished during that passage of play when he edged a good-length delivery from Prasidh, which moved away, to KL Rahul at second slip.

Thereafter, J&K seized control. Riding on an unbeaten century from Shubham Pundir (117; 221b; 12x4; 2x6) and contributions from

RANJI TROPHY FINAL

Pics: Sunil Joshi

CLASS ACT: J&K's Shubham Pundir enroute to his unbeaten century against Karnataka on Tuesday

Hassan and the in-form Abdul Samad (52 batting), the visitors closed the opening day at the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium on a commanding 284/2 in 85 overs.

Pundir joined Hassan in the 11th over, and the pair stitched together a crucial 138-run partnership that shifted the momentum decisively.

Hassan began cautiously before capitalising on loose deliveries. A couple of half-volleys from Vyshak allowed him to break free with successive cover drives to the boundary. Pundir too counterattacked effectively, taking on Prasidh during his otherwise disciplined spells. Their strokeplay signalled a clear shift in approach as they moved from survival to dominance.

Karnataka's cause was further hurt by lapses in the field. The hosts burned a couple of unsuccessful reviews and spilled more than one chance at crucial moments. The introduction of spin brought little respite as Pundir swept leggie Shreyas Gopal off his first delivery.

As the partnership flourished, Karnataka were pushed on to the defensive. The field placements spread out and the bowlers struggled to maintain consistent lengths, often offering the batters scoring opportunities. Hassan brought up his maiden first-class fifty in style, reaching the milestone off 77 balls with a late cut to the backward-point boundary. His innings included ten boundaries, many of them classical strokes.

The post-lunch session underlined Karnataka's inconsistency, especially with their lengths, while wicketkeeper Kruthik Krishna missed a stamping chance of Pundir, adding to the mounting frustration in the home camp.

Prasidh, the most effective among the bowlers, eventually broke the stand with a back-of-a-length delivery that Hassan edged to Rahul in the slips.

J&K skipper Parvez Dogra endured a painful outing. He was struck on the neck by a Prasidh bouncer and continued after treatment but looked uncomfortable. Substitute fielder K V Anesh later dropped him off Vyshak before Dogra was hit again, this time on the hand forcing him to retire hurt.

From there on, Abdul Samad and Pundir accelerated. The pair punished the spinners in the final session, with Pundir bringing up his fourth first-class century in style by stepping out to loft Shikar Shetty over deep midwicket.

By stumps, J&K had seized the initiative, with Pundir and Samad promising more runs on a day that belonged to the visitors. While Karnataka went with an unchanged squad, J&K were forced to make two changes with Vanshaj Sharma joining Khajuria on the sidelines.

SCOREBOARD

Jammu and Kashmir (I Innings): Qamran Iqbal c Rahul b Prasidh 6, Yawer Hassan c Rahul b Prasidh 88, Shubham Pundir (batting) 117, Parvez Dogra (retd hurt) 4, Abdul Samad (batting) 52. Extras: (nb-2, lb-2, LB-10) 12. **Total:** (2 wkts, 85 overs) 284. **Yet to bat:** Vanshaj Sharma, Abid Mushtaq, Sameer Ahmed, Shubham Ranjane, Pulkit Narang, Shreyas Gopal. 27-1-79-0, Shikar Shetty 20-0-68-0.

FINE SHOW: Yawer Hassan struck a solid 88 on the opening day of the Ranji Trophy final

'I remained positive & played my natural game'

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Hubballi: Yawer Hassan, nine matches old in first-class cricket, did not have the best of starts to his career. But the opener used the big stage – the Ranji Trophy final – to make a mark and repay his team's faith in him. He scored a well-crafted 88 against an experienced Karnataka bowling attack here on Tuesday.

The J&K opener went into the crunch game with his head coach Ajay Sharma's message to play the ball on its merit and not the bowler's reputation. "I think every player in our team thinks like this. If you look at the bowler, then it works on your mind. But when you react according to the merit of the ball, it works well," Hassan said at the end of the day's play.

Hassan said his lack of runs did not put any additional pressure on him. "Yes, I was not getting runs, but I remained positive and played my natural game. I was sure that runs would come and it did on this stage."

"Everyone in the dressing room supported me. We all played together for the last three-four years, and we know each other well. We know what to do at what time and we all support each other," Hassan added. Hassan, who displayed an array of shots with precision and timing on a placid wicket, delved into his game plan and pointed out, "On a red-soil pitch, there is good bounce, and when we drive, there is a chance of it taking the edge. My cut shot is a little strong, so I backed it."

> We all played together for the last three-four years, and we know each other well. We know what to do at what time and we all support each other
> —Yawer Hassan

Having inched towards the 300-mark and with eight wickets in hand, Hassan said, it was important to bat the home team out of the contest. "I think around 650-700 runs will be good. We will have to get that many runs because Karnataka has a good batting lineup."

FANS MAKE A BEELINE

The stadium were a festive look and the searing heat did not dampen the spirits as an excess of 6,000 people watched the opening day's proceedings. In a novel move, the KSCA decided to ticket the final and priced it at Rs 200 and Rs 300.

After the stampede at the M Chinnaswamy stadium in Bengaluru, KSCA left nothing to chance. On ticketing the final, KSCA secretary Santosh Menon said: "It was not about the money; it was just about regulating the crowd. It was a precautionary step."

KSCA honours Hubballi's cricketing son

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Hubballi: From a small-town boy with big dreams to a multifaceted cricketer and coach, Sunil Joshi's journey came full circle on Tuesday when he returned to his roots. The 55-year-old former India all-rounder was felicitated with a pavilion named after him at the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium here — a tribute to a legacy that inspired generations of cricketers from north Karnataka.

Joshi tried to mask his emotions, but tears flowed freely as memories spanning more than four decades came rushing back. As a youngster, he would wake up before the crack of dawn and travel nearly 60km from his hometown of Gadag to train on this very ground. Years later, he made his Ranji Trophy debut here and has since returned in various roles, including as a coach.

As BCCI president Mithun Manhas unveiled the pavilion block in his name, Joshi — accompanied by his wife Dr Ravneet — spoke about the emotional significance of the occasion. "Gadag gave me birth, Hubballi gave me cricket and character," he said.

Later, speaking to TOI, Joshi reflected on the moment. "It gives me immense pleasure to receive this honour, especially since it comes at a place where I started my journey. To see my name on the pavilion block means a lot to my family and me," he said.

Sunil Joshi

Recalling his debut at the venue, the current spin coach at the BCCI CoE shared one of his earliest defining memories. "My Ranji Trophy debut was here against Hyderabad in 1992. I remained unbeaten on 63 and crued valuable lessons from that match. We were eight wickets down when Venkatesh Prasad joined me in the middle. He told me, 'Take your time. I know you will be anxious to get your maiden half-century, but getting a hundred is more important here.' Joshi said he hopes the honour will inspire young cricketers to dream big, particularly those from smaller towns. "I come from the mofussil, and if my name on the stand can inspire even one young cricketer over the next five days or in the coming years, then it will have true meaning," said the former India left-arm spinner.

Joshi also thanked the Karnataka State Cricket Association office-bearers and the managing committee — many of whom are former teammates — for the recognition. "I'm very grateful to the KSCA president and my dear friend Venkatesh Prasad and his team for the honour. My wife, Ravneet, being here was special because she has played such a huge role in my journey. I wouldn't have come this far without her unconditional support," he added.

SNAP SHOTS

India wom to face Pak

The International Cricket Council (ICC) unveiled the schedule for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 to be held in England. England will face Sri Lanka in the opening fixture on June 12 while India will face Pakistan in their first match at Edgbaston two days later.

Hakimi to stand trial after rape allegation: Paris Saint-Germain defender Achraf Hakimi said that he will stand trial following a rape accusation made against him. The accusation stems from a Feb 2023 incident. PSG coach Luis Enrique said during a press conference on Tuesday ahead of the Monaco match that, "this matter is in the hands of the authorities."

On Wednesday: Champs League: Atalanta vs Dortmund (23.30 pm), Juventus vs Galatasaray, PSG vs Monaco, Real Madrid vs Benfica (all matches at 1.30 am, Thursday)

Odisha, Inter Kashi share spoils: Odisha FC and Inter Kashi FC played out a goalless draw in an Indian Super League match in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday. Despite nine attempts from Odisha and eight from Inter Kashi, only two shots on target were registered by each side.

Aakarshi enters main draw: Aakarshi Kashyap defeated Chinese Taipei's Lee Yu-Hsuan to enter the women's singles main draw at the German Open Super 300 badminton tournament in Mulheim an der Ruhr on Tuesday. Kashyap, world No. 62, notched up a 21-10, 21-15 win over Lee in a lop-sided match in the qualifiers.

Nagal, Dhamne advance: Sumit Nagal beat seventh seed Rio Noguchi of Japan 6-1, 6-2 at the Maha Open ATP Challenger 75 championship in Pune on Tuesday. Wildcard Manas Dhamne battled past Stefanos Sakellaridis of Greece 6-4, 7-6 (4).

AIU bans Indian runner Pooja: Indian long-distance runner Pooja Aatmaram had made a nervous dash away from her Chaperone ahead of a scheduled in-competition dope test last year, revealed the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) as it handed her a reduced three-year ban for early admission of guilt.

FC Deccan prevail: FC Deccan rallied to score a 3-2 win over Blitz FC in the BDFA 'A' division league football championship in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

Results: 'A' Div: Bangalore Eagles FC 4-0 Vinod B 30, Rachanna Shivraj 76, 82, Sengandan Rajagan 96+3 (st Janesh); Union FC 2-0 Dhanush Kumar 26, 42; OYES FC 2 (Nitin Kumar Nagar 57, Bharth Kawale 90+penalty) Blitz FC 0; FC Deccan 3-0 Rajesh Sandhu Singh 61, Arman Chittkung 64, 76 (st Blitz FC 2 (Mikual Gawda 32, 48).

'B' Div: Group A: Mid Sporting FC 4-0 Gaul K Pgambal 40, Thangjam Santhosh 44, 63, 90 (st ADE FC); Kakatiya Orange Blue Sangh 47-pole.

Bucknor regrets wrong decision

New Delhi: More than two decades after making what was then widely seen as a "dreadful" decision against Indian cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar, legendary umpire **Steve Bucknor** has finally expressed regrets and accepted that "it was a mistake." Bucknor, who retired in 2009, was one of the most respected umpires in world cricket for over two decades.

However, he did make a few contentious calls involving Tendulkar, the most

SACHIN DISMISSAL

shocking being an LBW dismissal during an India-Australia Test match at Brisbane's Gabba 22 years ago.

In an interview with the West Indies Cricket Umpires' Association, when Bucknor was asked about one of the most difficult decisions he had to live with as an umpire, he said, "Giving Sachin Tendulkar out leg before wicket, and it's a matter of knowing that it was a mistake, but until this day, every day, people talk about it. "Why did I give him out? Was he out and so on? But then in life, mistakes happen. I have accepted that it was a mistake, and life goes on."

BCCI

In that match at Gabba in the 2003-04 series, Tendulkar was given out LBW by Bucknor following a loud appeal from Australian fast bowler Jason Gillespie and his teammates.

Batting on 3, Tendulkar had attempted to leave the ball, which struck him high on the pads, but Bucknor was convinced by the Australian appeal. Television replays later confirmed the ball was clearly going over the stumps. In the commentary box, the late Tony Greig had referred to it as "a dreadful" decision and he was not the only one who thought that way at the time.

The match, the first of a four-match series and in which India skipper Sourav Ganguly struck a fluent 144, ended in a draw. That was not the only instance when Bucknor gave Tendulkar out wrongly. In a match against Pakistan at Eden Gardens in 2005, the Jamaican adjudged Tendulkar caught behind off Abdul Razzaq despite a half-hearted appeal. Replays, however, showed a wide gap between the bat and the ball.

During an interactive session with fans in 2024, Tendulkar was asked about his relationship with Bucknor, and in lighter vein, he had said, "When I am batting, give him boxing gloves to wear (so he can't raise his finger)."

Bucknor, 79, officiated in 128 Test matches between 1989 and 2009 and also holds the record for standing in five consecutive World Cup finals from 1992 to 2007. ■■

Australia outplay India

Brisbane: Australia outplayed reigning world champions India in all departments to pick up a comfortable six-wicket win in the first Women's ODI here on Tuesday.

India put up an ordinary performance with the bat to be bowled out for 214 despite solid fifties from Smriti Mandhana (58 off 78) and captain Harmanpreet Kaur (53 off 84). Australia chased down the modest target with little difficulty following fifties from skipper Alyssa Healy

WOMEN'S ODI

(70 off 79), who is in the middle of her farewell series, and Beth Mooney (70 off 79).

Spinner Ashleigh Gardner was the standout bowler for the home team, returning figures of three for 33 in seven overs. Despite a drought-ending ICC title in Nov, the Harmanpreet-led side still remains a work in progress and doesn't have the aura of the all-conquering Australian side.

The positives for India with the ball was the performance

Getty Images

CAPTAIN'S KNOCK: Alyssa Healy

of left-arm spinner Shree Charani, who was rewarded with wickets of Phoebe Litchfield and Georgia Voll in successive balls in the 11th over.

India had won the toss and opted to bat at the Allan Border Field. With Kim Garth and Ellyse Perry out of the three-match series due to injuries, pacers Megan Schutt and Lucy Hamilton were called up to the Australian side at the 11th hour.

Brief scores: India: 214 all out in 48.3 overs (Smriti 58, Harmanpreet 53, Kashvee 40, Megan 2-42, Ashleigh 3-33) lost to **Australia: 217/4 in 38.2 overs** (Beth 36, Alyssa 50, Annabel 48 n.o.; Sneha Charani 2-41). ■■

Spain deny India season's first win

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The Indian men's hockey team was less than two minutes away from grabbing their first win of FIH Pro League when Spain scored the equaliser through Bruno Font in the 58th minute to take the game into penalty shoot-out. The Spaniards grabbed the bonus point thanks to a 4-3 win at Tuesday's Hockey Centre in Hobarton Tuesday.

It was once again a heartbreak for Craig Fulton's men who had taken the lead through Maninder Singh in the 19th minute. Hardik Singh intercepted the ball at the 25m line and played it to Maninder at the top of the D. He controlled it well before firing it into the bottom right corner with a reverse hit.

HOCKEY PRO LEAGUE

After earning their first point of the season against Australia in the last match, it was a great start for India, and they went all out in search for more. But the finishing wasn't great inside the D. Also, they overall won four penalty corners but failed to score either of them. Amit Rohidas missed two while Jugraj Singh and Rajinder Singh failed to convert one each.

Despite the result, coach Fulton would be pleased with the 'performance' as that was his side focus ahead of the game. India next face Australia on Wednesday.

K'taka colts crash out in quarterfinals

Times News Network

The curtains dropped on Karnataka's campaign at the Col CK Nayudu Trophy U-23 tournament, as Mumbai qualified on the back of their first-innings lead in the quarterfinal match which ended in a draw.

Having dominated the proceedings from the opening day, hosts Mumbai entered the final day with a 316-run first-in-

CK NAYUDU TROPHY

nings lead. Mumbai, who began on their overnight score of 616/7, added 49 runs before they lost their last three wickets.

Mumbai's first-innings score gave them a whopping 425-run lead over Karnataka – who struggled with both bat and ball in the knockout encounter. For the visitors, Samit Dravid was the pick of the bowlers, returning a three-wicket haul, while Kartikkeya KP and skipper Aseesh Ivar Gautam picked up two wickets each.

With their fate sealed, Karnataka folded to 110/7 in 48 overs in the second innings when stumps were drawn. As in the first innings, Dhruv Prabhakar fought a lone battle – with a hard-fought 31 off 134 deliveries.

Mumbai will now take on Maharashtra in the semifinal, while Chattisgarh and Tamil Nadu will face off in the other last-four contest. While, Maharashtra defeated Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu ousted Punjab. In the other quarterfinal, Chhattisgarh got past Rajasthan.

Brief scores: Karnataka: 240 & 110/7 in 48 overs: (Dhruv Prabhakar 31; n.o.; Sujayesh Shetty 2-34), Aditya Dhesai 2-16, Manan Bhatt 2-25) lost to **Mumbai: 665 (with 616/7) all out in 230 overs** (Kartikkeya Kumar 29, Himanshu Singh 30, Samit Dravid 3-77, Aseesh Ivar Gautam 2-14, Karthikeya KP 2-3/4).

BEL SC cruise past SWR Rail Club

Times News Network

Bengaluru: BEL Sports Club registered a massive 156-run win over SWR Rail Club in the KSCA Group II-B Division tournament here recently. Opting to bat, Nagendra Bisba and Gautham Reddy were the architects of BEL's big victory with unbeaten centuries. The pair powered BEL to a massive total of 323/1 in 20 overs. In reply, SWR were restricted to 98/9 in 14 overs. For BEL, M Arun and Barath C returned three-wicket hauls.

Brief scores: BEL SC: 323/1in 20 overs (Nagendra Bisba 107 n.o.-154b, 12x4, 3x6, Shiva M 95, Gautham Reddy 128 n.o.-90b, 20x4, 12x6) lost **SWR RC: 98/9 in 14 overs** (M Arun 3-23, Raghavendra H 2-7, Barath C 3-9). **BBMP: 157/5 in 20 overs** (Tilak Hussain 43, Shylesh 46 n.o.; Anja Gowda 2-23, Bhyrai Pasha 3-29) lost **Secretariat: 00: 126 in 19.3 overs** (Aryan Gowda 30; S Shylesh 3-18, Praveen Kothari 2-35, Sahana Swamy Pasale 2-19). **Bosch SC: 144/6 in 20 overs** (Rauchal Durga ward 36, Pradeep Gowda 43, Raj Chauhan 29; Rajesh 5.8-2-30) lost to **Advocate Assn: 00: 149/5 in 18.4 overs** (Shreyas Kumar 64, K Karthik 2-28). **SWR CW, Mysuru: 134/7 in 20 overs** (Khushboo HC 35, Sahana K 42, Akhina SP 2-33, Lokya Naik 2-23, Karan U 2-26) lost to **LIC SC: 133/2 in 14.4 overs** (Bhavya KS, Kaushal U 36 n.o.). **VISL OC, Bhadravathi: 140/7 in 20 overs** (Kargar D 33, Tanmay M 34, Shreyash Sagar 44; Alok Kumar 2-30, KS Kartikeya 2-30, Aseem Ravichandran 2-29) lost **BDSA, SWR: 139/7 in 20 overs** (Yogi 2-29, Gagan D 4-27, Sreejayek Sagar 2-26).

Bangalore Telephones: 239/3 in 20 overs (Vikram 54, S Praveen 52, Syed Ahmed 63 n.o.; Rakshith K 2-46) lost **BTRE SC: 150 in 19.3 overs** (Ghatotkacha 38, G Manoj ran 2-23, Rakshith K 3-25). **Commercial Tax CC: 180/5 in 20 overs** (Vijayakumar 45 n.o., Ameeka 45; Manoj K 2-26) lost **BDM, Kar SC: 181/4 in 18.5 overs** (Ananth Mangalavathi 61, Sanjay VL 38, Arun KA 2-30, Dhanoj Naik 2-24). **L & T SC: 146/7 in 20 overs** (Venkatesh P 29, Sampath Kumar 3-34) lost **BWSSB: 128 in 19.5 overs** (Renuka Prasad 42, Preetham M, 36; Darshan S 26; Nikhil Kedar 3-5, Bhagavanprasad 3-27). **Karnataka Bank: 154/9 in 2 overs** (Nikhil K 34, Prajwal Bylamma Srinivas 33, Praveen 34; Sachin 3-3, Rahul Gollal 3-21, Mahesh Naik Pooja 2-36) lost **Hutti Gold Mines: 113 in 18.3 overs** (Prabhu Sai Kumar 61; Sagar Sunil Kumar 3-25, Dhanoj Uttu 5-16, Ajay Bhide 2-3, Vinayak B 2-12). **UBS: 186/7 in 20 overs** (Vinay Pai 25 n.o.; Mit Hemesh 3-25, Satish Pandey 2-16) lost to **IAF, Yelahanka: 188/6 in 14.4 overs** (Shamar Gagan 40, Abhishek Shankara 2-36, Vinu Prasad 2-29). **CEL SC: 175/6 in 20 overs** (Aryan BV 126, Hitesh 23n.o.; Dhanith N 2-20) lost **SWRL, Mysuru: 136 in 19.3 overs** (Prashwanth J 25, Suhas B 59, Kapil S 11, Keerthan JR 2-33, Sandhiksha S-25).

BK & Prajwal SC: 92/6 in 17.2 overs (Nikhan 40, Ambresh 2-22, Aadarsh Prajwal 2-22) lost to **Bhagirathi: 104/1 in 9.5 overs** (Kadambi Prajwal 80 n.o.). **ADE SC: 173/6 in 20 overs** (Protham B 71, Shakshat Hussain 28, Sumanth Yadav 2-24, Ravi Kumar 2-29) lost **BDSA, SWR: 174/7 in 20 overs** (Vikram K 58, Sumanth Yadav 42 n.o.; Prasanth KM 2-12, Protham B 3-18). **EPF Sports & RC: 127/9 in 20 overs** (Kotabagi Ruji Rita 49 n.o.; Samarshekara Murthy 2-23) lost to **RSP: 128/6 in 17.1 overs** (Rakesh NK 40, Dastgeer B 35 n.o.; Kotabagi Ruji Rita 2-33, Anil Kumar 3-24). **LIDS: 164/4 in 20 overs** (Karan Raghavendra 53 n.o., Vishwas K 27) lost to **IAF, Jalahalli: 132/7 in 18.2 overs** (Shashi Shetty, 81). **MES Club: 132/8 in 20 overs** (T Vishwas 30, Krishna KV 27 n.o.; Manoj Hill 3-13) lost **BHEL: 139/5: 13.0 in 20 overs** (Mahesh Acharya 35, Muralidhara J 2-20). **F Vishwas 2-21, Santhosh Kumar 3-23). Railway Institute: 173/3 in 20 overs** (Chandrasekhar H 60, Shiv Shetty 54n.o.; Ankit Gowda 41 n.o.; Manoj H 2-29) lost **Bangalore Dairy: 112 in 19.3 overs** (Manoj H 43, Sitaram Meena 2-4, Akhil UK 4-7, Sanjeev Kumar 3-16). **Continental Automotive: 168/4 in 20 overs** (Thejas L 48, Rishabh Kotak 64, Karthik J 53; Dhanu Prakash 2-46) lost **ITI: 154 in 16 overs** (Srinivasa Murthy 30, Thejas L 3-7, Rishabh Kotak 2-22, Karthik J 3-33). **BEMRC: 105/7 in 20 overs** (Rahul Gowda 3-21, Shaina Pyari 2-12; Nikhil Kumar M 2-21) lost to **Triton, Mysuru: 109/3 in 12.2 overs** (Krishna V 42, Indresh S 57). **ABB: 108/9 in 20 overs** (Dwari Dhirti 3-11, Kishore VS 3-12) lost to **Titan: 109/1 in 9.2 overs** (Mohith BA 65, Karna Vamshi 32 n.o.). **Bosch SC: 144/6 in 20 overs** (Kirtiraj Gowda Ras 36, Shreeth Srinivas 45, Manjunath MR 3-29) lost **NAL: 123/9 in 20 overs** (Ajinkya KR 25, Praveen Kumar S; n.o.; Sharanpranitha Ras 4-33, Naresh S 2-22). **BEML CD SC, Mysuru: 228/6 in 20 overs** (Prashanth Urs 95, Mohith L 48, Prajwal Kumar 32; Naveen Kumara 2-32, Umesha Basavaraju 2-24) lost **ITC: 189/9 in 20 overs** (Khundrakpam 82, Roshan Raja 4-6, Girisha J 2-29).

Substitute Sesko seals win for Man United

Liverpool: Manchester United's Benjamin Sesko came off the bench to score a vital goal for the second game in a row as he fired the winner in a 1-0 Premier League win at Everton. Sesko sealed an uninspiring clash at the Hill Dickinson Stadium in the 71st minute as he swept in a clinical first-time shot from Bryan Mbeumo's pass after a flowing counter-attack.

FOOTBALL

Victory on Monday sent Michael Carrick's United clear in fourth place in the table, three points ahead of Chelsea and Liverpool. Sesko's goal was a rare moment of quality in a scrappy match in which United almost took the lead in the opening minutes when James Tarkowski cleared an Amad Diallo effort off the line.

This was not a polished display by United, but it continued caretaker coach Carrick's impressive impact since taking charge. He has now won five and drawn one of his six games. ■■■■

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Two decades after his controversial LBW decision against Sachin Tendulkar, umpire Steve Bucknor finally accepts that "It was a mistake", P 22

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THE TIMES

INCLUSIVE OF BANGALORE TIMES

"A SUPERSTAR IS NOT 'UPAR' LAW," OBSERVES HC, ASKS B'LURU COPS NOT TO TAKE COERCIVE ACTION AGAINST ACTOR RANVEER SINGH IN 'KANTARA' MIMICRY CASE 2

15-year-old boy killed in clash in Shivamogga, 7 teens arrested

Shivamogga: A 15-year-old boy was killed in a clash at Urgadur in Shivamogga Monday night. Police Tuesday arrested seven minors, aged 16-17, allegedly involved in the incident, **reports Udaya Sagar**.

The victim, Sanketh, son of a local driver Kumar, was returning home after attending a special SSLC Mathematics coaching class at a govt high school. The session, held with permission from parents, took place from 6.30pm to 8pm.

According to police, the incident occurred in an open field behind the school premises when Sanketh was walking back home. Preliminary probe indicates that a fight broke out among a group of boys, some of whom were reportedly school dropouts.

CM Siddaramaiah condemned the incident and announced Rs 15 lakh compensation for Sanketh's family.

▶ Struck on chest, P 5

US tariffs reduce to 10%, exporters stay nervous

Working To Up It To 15%: White House Official

Sidhartha@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Indian exporters are finally breathing easy with goods entering the US on payment of 10% additional tariff from Monday, instead of the 35% that was applicable since the start of the month.

But there is also anxiety over how long this rate will continue given US President Donald Trump's mercurial turns over tariffs. Early Saturday, he had announced his intent to increase the levy to 15%, although the executive order is yet to be issued.

On Monday, US Customs and Border Protection agency notified shippers that the rate would be 10%. A White House official told Reuters that Trump has had "no change of heart" in his desire for 15% tariff but offered no details.

Following US supreme court striking down his authority to impose reciprocal tariffs, Trump invoked section 122 of the Tariff Act 1974 to levy 10% additional tariffs, citing balance of payments problems. The provision can only be used for 150 days.

▶ 50% on auto parts, P 10

CHEERS FOR MOST

- **Gems and jewellery** sector waiting for **more clarity on specific levies** amid some consignments being held back in US
- For most other Indian exporters, there's **reason to cheer with tariffs now reducing** from 50% till a few days back to 18%
- **Weakened rupee** is helping exports turn more competitive in key sectors

US moves closer to tougher H-1B norms

In what could push up minimum wage requirements for sponsored workers, the US moved closer to revising wage rules for foreign workers after a proposed regulation impacting H-1B visa and employment-based green card process cleared federal review. It'll likely be put up for comments before finalisation. P 18

FedEx joins US cos in seeking refund

FedEx is suing the US govt, becoming the latest company to request a refund on what it paid for tariffs set by President Donald Trump last year after the country's Supreme Court ruled that the tariffs are illegal. More than 1,000 companies have filed suit in the US Court of International Trade. AGENCIES

Union Cabinet clears renaming of Kerala as Keralam

The Union Cabinet Tuesday approved the proposal for renaming Kerala as Keralam. PM Modi said the decision "reflects the will of the people of the state". The Kerala govt had earlier made two requests to the Centre to change the name, **reports Dipak Dash**. Announcing the decision, I&B minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that after the Cabinet approval, the President will refer the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 to Kerala legislative assembly for expressing its views under Article-3 of the Constitution. P 15

Anthropic's Cobol tool shakes Wall St, IBM has biggest one-day fall in 25 yrs

Shilpa Phadnis & Veena Mani

Anthropic's claim that its AI coding tool Claude can understand and modernise programming language Cobol sent IBM shares down 13% on Monday, its steepest single-day fall in over 25 years, wiping out nearly $30 billion in its market capitalisation.

Cobol is a decades-old programming language that underpins many systems running on IBM's mainframes, which are **used by critical infrastructure, including those of banks, airlines and govts**. Around the world, there are very few Cobol developers anymore, the original developers have retired, and universities no longer teach the language.

▶ EDIT: Deep Steal

▶ Overhaul complex, P 19

ANTHROPIC CRIES THEFT, GETS FLAK

- **Anthropic accuses 3 Chinese cos** — DeepSeek, Moonshot and MiniMax — **of improperly harvesting large amounts of data** from its AI technologies in an effort to accelerate the development of their own systems
- Rival OpenAI has also accused Chinese firms of lifting data from ChatGPT
- Elon Musk tweets, **'Anthropic is guilty of stealing** training data at massive scale and has had to pay settlements'
- Anthropic faces multiple lawsuits accusing it of illegally **using copyrighted internet data** to train its systems
- NYT has sued OpenAI and Microsoft claiming **its articles were used to train chatbots** that now compete with it as a source of reliable info

Hegseth summons Amodei in dispute

US defence secretary Pete Hegseth was to meet Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei at Pentagon Tuesday to discuss how its tech is used on classified systems. DoD officials hope to pressure the company to allow its model to be used more broadly. P 18

Sensex dips 1,069 pts, investors lose ₹3.6L cr

The global sell-off also affected Dalal St, with sensex sliding by 1,069 points to close at 82,230 points, leaving investors poorer by Rs 3.6 lakh crore. IT stocks crashed 4.5% in BSE's IT index led by Infosys, TCS, HCL Tech and Tech Mahindra. P 19

DEVJI SURRENDERS

Tippiri Tirupati, alias Devji, (left) and other top Maoists surrendered in presence of Telangana DGP in Hyderabad Tuesday | P 15

No classes for 10, 12 before April 1: CBSE

Bengaluru regional office of CBSE has instructed all affiliated schools in Karnataka not to commence Classes 10 and 12 before April 1. Parents have complained that students are losing out on vacations as classes begin soon after exams. P 2

AI-aided cheating at exam busted in Maha

An inspection at Class 12 exams in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli busted an AI-driven cheating racket. Questions were photographed out of the hall, fed into ChatGPT for responses, printed nearby and smuggled back to students for mass copying. P 6

Ruckus at Azim Premji Univ over Kashmir talk; 25 ABVP activists detained

Sruthysanan.Ullas
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Tension prevailed at Azim Premji University (APU) near Sarjapur here Tuesday after members of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student organisation affiliated with RSS, barged into the campus protesting a scheduled discussion on Kashmir at the university.

Police said around 25 ABVP activists were taken into preventive custody. Two platoons of the state reserve police force were deployed at APU as a precaution.

The discussion was organised by Spark APU, a reading circle affiliated with All India Students Association (AISA), the student wing of CPI (M-L). ABVP claimed the discussion sought to promote anti-national views.

ABVP members defaced the Azim Premji University signboard before entering the Sarjapur campus

Posters for the talk, titled 'Kunan Poshpora — 35 years after the incident occurred in Kashmir', referred to allegations that 30 women were gang raped by security forces in Kunan and Poshpora in Kupwara district.

The university clarified that it had not granted permission for the event.

▶ 'Programme not held', P 5

BJP, community groups slam K'taka govt over honour-killing bill

Bengaluru: The Congress govt's proposal to introduce a bill to curb crimes related to inter-caste marriages, including honour killings and other atrocities, has run into rough weather with BJP and community groups terming the law discriminatory, **reports BV Shivashankar**.

Taking note of rising cases of honour killing, the department of law and parliamentary affairs has prepared Karnataka Choice in Marriage and Prevention and Prohibition of Crimes in the Name of Honour and Tradition Bill, 2026. The bill is expected to be tabled in the budget session in March.

The key objection is that the bill targets inter-caste marriages and excludes inter-faith marriages.

▶ 'Appear superfluous', P 5

For med students in Iran, it's matter of life or exam

Hundreds of Indian medical students in Iran face a difficult choice after central govt advised Indians to leave the country amid rising tensions and a possible US strike. About 1,000-1,500 Indian students must appear for crucial exams scheduled in early March, mandatory for continuation of their degrees. Missing them could mean losing up to six months of academic progress. Students, who faced similar uncertainty during Israel-Iran conflict last year, urged govt intervention to postpone exams and ensure safe evacuation. All India Medical Students' Association has written to the PM for help. P 9

Family took loan to pay ₹8 lakh for air ambulance that crashed

Vishvendu Jaipuriar | TNN

Chatra: A family sinking in debt after a medical emergency required them to hire an air ambulance for Rs 8 lakh. A young pilot days away from going on leave for a close friend's wedding. An anaesthetist who stepped in for a colleague at the last moment.

These are some of the stories that lie buried in the debris of the Delhi-bound Beechcraft C90 charter that crashed into a forest in Jharkhand's Chatra late Monday, killing all seven people on board. It had taken off from Ranchi less than 30 minutes earlier, ferrying hotel owner Sanjay Kumar to Delhi's Ganga Ram Hospital for treatment of burns suffered in an LPG cylinder explosion on Feb 16.

> We arranged the money somehow. We believed the treatment in Delhi would give him a second chance. Instead, we lost three of our family members — A RELATIVE

> If negligence, human error, or any violation of safety protocol is found at any level, the strictest action will be ensured against those responsible — IRFAN ANSARI | JHARKHAND HEALTH MINISTER

A DGCA team investigates the remains of the air ambulance that crashed in Chatra

Among the seven crash victims were Sanjay's wife Archana Deri and the couple's teenage nephew Dhruv Kumar. The family had taken loans and borrowed from relatives to fund Sanjay's treatment after the accident at his roadside hotel.

▶ Paid ₹5L in advance, P 10

Indians give lavishly, but religion bags lion's share

Nearly 7 in 10 Indians give in some form, but most donations flow to religious institutions and beggars — not social-purpose organisations, writes **Himanshi Dhawan**

Religion Over NGOs...

Indians do give. In fact, 68% of respondents reported giving in some form — cash, in-kind support, or volunteering — over a three month recall period, according to a survey by Ashoka University's Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP). **But here's the twist** | Most individual giving in India does not go to NGOs/social-purpose organisations (SPOs).

Individual donations go to...

There is an overlap in donations: Individuals who donate to religious organisations might also give to others

Little Flows Through Formal Channels

The report frames everyday giving as a large, growing pool that India still under-leverages.

- In 2023, everyday giving was estimated at ₹34,000 cr, but only 10% flowed through formal channels.
- By 2025, 'retail giving' reached ₹37,000 cr, overtaking CSR spending (₹28,000 crore) — yet just over 23% was channelled formally.

Gayatri Nair Lobo of Educate Girls, an NGO, said there is an element of trust when people give to religious institutions. "The challenge is to transfer that trust towards SPOs."

What People Give

India's giving is not only about cash transfers. The dominant mode is everyday tangible support

Forms of giving (weighted %)

In-kind giving and small cash gifts are easiest to route through religious institutions and face-to-face asks, not through online donation infrastructure or formal NGO fundraising.

...Unlike In The West

In mature philanthropic markets, 'everyday donors' are the funding backbone for NGOs.

US | IRS data shows itemised charitable deductions of **$257.6 bn** in tax year 2022

UK | HMRC data shows charities received **£1.6 bn** via Gift Aid in tax year ending April 2024

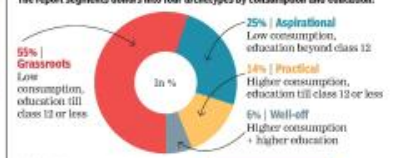
The report says mature markets use formal channels to harness everyday giving, while in India, individual giving is largely informal and hard to track — meaning NGOs struggle to "draw, measure and scale" these contributions.

An official counts donations collected at a temple in India

Who Gives?

The report links giving behaviour to monthly consumption expenditure. Even at low consumption, giving is widespread: around 50% of households give at Rs 4,000-5,000 monthly consumption; probability rises steeply with higher consumption (above Rs 8,000).

The report segments donors into four archetypes by consumption and education:



And it estimates a total annual 'market size' of ₹54,000 cr, split roughly as

Pamela Wiepking of the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy says India already has a strong culture of community giving, but expanding it towards more impactful causes will require better infrastructure and greater accountability from nonprofits to both donors and the communities they serve.

UK to issue e-visa from today

Tarnughna Banerjee & Sabbro Niyogi | TNN

Kolkata: The UK immigration system will go fully digital from Wednesday, replacing physical visa stickers traditionally pasted in passports with e-visa.

While applicants will still have to visit a visa application centre for biometric enrolment and identity verification, their passports will be returned the same day.

"With an e-visa, people have to visit VAC only once to confirm their identity. VAC will return the passport at that time, sparing applicants the need to return to collect the passport after the vignette is pasted," Bharat Ihave, deputy head of mission of British deputy High Commission, Kolkata, said on Tuesday.

Those who have a valid sticker visa on their passports, do not need to apply afresh for e-visa

A digital record of a person's immigration status, e-visa confirms the visa type — tourist, visitor, student, or skilled worker — or settlement status and outlines conditions, like permission to work or study. The status is accessible through a UK Visas and Immigration online account and is digitally linked to the traveller's passport.

"UKVI is a self-verification account. Every traveller in a family will have to have a dedicated UKVI account linked to their passports. The information can be stored in a mobile but there has to be separate UKVI accounts for all travellers in the group," Dave said.

Those who have a valid sticker visa in their passports, do not need to apply afresh for e-visa but will have to create a UKVI account and link it to their passport.

Earlier, an applicant's passport would be retained during the visa processing, typically taking around three weeks for a tourist visa, and was returned later with the vignette sticker.

Travel operators say the shift will offer greater flexibility. Anil Punjabi, chairman (east) of Travel Agents Federation of India, called it a "big relief" for those travelling to Europe or other places. "The biggest advantage is that travellers can retain their passports while applying for UK e-visa and apply for a visa for another country. Once the UK e-visa is approved, they can check online and enter the UK from any country," he said.

A deputy high commission official said that 6,16,468 visitor visas were issued to Indians from Aug 2024 to Sept 2025, along with 2,13,880 visa across work, study, and other categories.

Understand wish to remove colonial statues but Lutyens was architect, not viceroy: Great-grandson

Naomi Canton

London: The great-grandson of British architect Edwin Lutyens, Matt Ridley, has criticised removal of the bust of his ancestor from Rashtrapati Bhavan.

President Droupadi Murmu unveiled its replacement — a bust of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the first and last Indian governor-general of Independent India — on Monday.

Ridley, a science writer, posted a photo of himself next to Lutyens' bust, on X, and wrote: "Sad to read that the bust of Lutyens (my great grandfather) is to be removed from the presidential palace he designed in Delhi. Here I am with it last year. I wondered at the time why his name had been removed from the plinth."

He posted a second photo of a replica of the bust on top of his bookshelf, saying: "For those suggesting I offer a home for Lutyens' bust from Delhi, I already have a copy of it. It looks down on my desk as I write this. It was sculpted by Sir William Reid-Dick. I understand India's wish to remove colonial statues but he was an architect, not a viceroy."

X user Oliver Lewis wrote: "This is genuinely appalling. Lutyens designed the building, and built for India probably the most fantastic Head of State 'HQ' anywhere in the world." To which Ridley replied: "Agreed. Rashtrapati Bhavan is a more elegant, ingenious and imaginative building than Buckingham Palace, the White House, the Quai d'Orsay, the Kremlin or the presidential palace in Beijing. It carefully incorporates Buddhist, Hindu, Jain and Muslim architectural themes."

Ridley posted a photo of himself next to the bust

> **Rashtrapati Bhavan is a more elegant, ingenious and imaginative building than Buckingham Palace, the White House, the Quai d'Orsay, the Kremlin or the presidential palace in Beijing**
>
> **MATT RIDLEY**
> British architect Edwin Lutyens great-grandson

Sena UBT MP Priyanka Chaturvedi agreed on X: "Many countries preserve the heritage and legacy of their nation's lived history for generations to remember — the good, the bad and the ugly included to learn from — but in new India we are hell bent on replacing it with shiny new glass domes or convention centres with no soul or cultural context."

X user Palash wrote: "Lee Kuan Yew chose NOT to remove Sir Stamford Raffles' statue from Singapore despite pressure from many leaders in 1966. His rationale was simple — Singapore cannot enter a new future with anger towards the past." But X user SagarsBharat wrote: "Your grandfather Edwin Lutyens wasn't just an 'architect', he was a nasty racist. You should be happy Indians didn't knock that bust of your grandfather off with a hammer."